

Shahal backs Palestinian state

TEL AVIV (R) — A top contender to lead Israel's main opposition party said he favoured establishment of a Palestinian state linked to Jordan after the Gulf war, newspapers reported Friday. Moshe Shahal, 56, a former energy minister, recently announced he would join the race for the Labour Party leadership now held by Shimon Peres. "I could never understand the basis for the concept of saying no to a Palestinian state," he was quoted as telling a party gathering. "I say definitely yes. If it will lead to a peace settlement between us and the Palestinians and the Arab world, it is a chance." Asked by party colleague and former Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin exactly what he meant, Mr. Shahal replied: "I am prepared to recognise a Palestinian entity, call it what you like, in the framework of a confederacy with Jordan." He said such a state was possible if Palestinians recognised Israel and dropped demands such as the right to return to areas they inhabited in pre-1948 Palestine. Mr. Shahal, known as a centrist and pragmatist, surprised party circles and drew criticism from hawkish Labour members.

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Masri, Dumas discuss Gulf peace

PARIS (Petra) — Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and his French counterpart Roland Dumas Friday reviewed the Soviet initiative to end the war in the Gulf and bring about peace to the region. Mr. Masri voiced Jordanian support for the plan and stressed the need for France and the European countries to follow a course that would enable them to deal with the plan "swiftly and positively." Mr. Masri said France should play its role in supporting peaceful dialogue and implementing international legitimacy without going beyond its limitations, as is expected by the Arabs. Mr. Masri and Mr. Dumas discussed future relations between the Arab World and the European Community (EC) as well as the Jordanian-French relations. The meeting was attended by the Jordanian ambassador to France, Awad Al Khalidi. Mr. Masri will hold a meeting next Monday with the EC "troika," which groups Luxembourg, Italy and the Netherlands, to discuss future Arab-European relations in the light of the prevailing situation in the region. This will be part of a series of meetings the European Community will be holding with several of the countries in the region.

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War and peace hang on balance

Soviets present revised six-point peace proposal

Combined agency dispatches

A SOVIET SPOKESMAN Friday presented a revised six-point set of provisions agreed by Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and an end to the Gulf war. The new plan, which the spokesman said had not yet been ratified by the Iraqi leadership in Baghdad, appeared to be part of an effort by Moscow to bring its own peace plan and U.S. demands closer together. Reached after lengthy new discussions during the day, the provisions call for the withdrawal to begin one day after a cease-fire, Soviet spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko said. He said the withdrawal would

be completed 21 days after the cease-fire.

U.S. President George Bush demanded earlier Friday that Iraq begin a withdrawal of its troops from Kuwait by noon Saturday Eastern U.S. time (1700 GMT) and complete it within a week in order to avoid a ground war.

Asked about the response of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev to Mr. Bush's ultimatum, Mr. Ignatenko said it was the revised Soviet plan.

Mr. Ignatenko said Mr. Gorbachev had spoke with Mr. Bush by telephone for 90 minutes just before the news conference. Bush spokesman Martin Fitzwater said the U.S. president had no immediate comment.

In addition, Mr. Ignatenko listed these points of the new plan:

— Iraq would implement U.N. resolution 660, calling for an immediate withdrawal from Kuwait, without delay and without conditions.

— After withdrawal, all other Security Council resolutions will "lose their meaning and be rescinded."

— Prisoners of war would be released within 72 hours after the cease-fire begins.

— Supervision of the withdrawal would be conducted by a peacekeeping force determined by the U.N. Security Council.

In Washington, Mr. Bush had

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King welcomes Soviet move and Iraqi response

By Abdullah Hasanat
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein Friday welcomed the Soviet initiative to end the Gulf war and Iraq's acceptance of the plan and hoped that peace in the Gulf would open "a bright and new chapter in the history of this Arab Nation."

"I am full of optimism and hope at developments at hand," the King told reporters at Marka airport after bidding farewell to Sudanese leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir. "I hope we are at an end to darkness and are witnessing

the breaking of a new dawn."

The King Friday met separately with the ambassadors of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the U.S., the Soviet Union, China, France and Britain — and informed them of Jordan's response to the Soviet plan. King Hussein asked the ambassadors to convey to their governments Jordan's backing of the Soviet peace plan based on Security Council resolutions.

The King also summoned Arab ambassadors to Jordan and told them of Jordan's backing of the "peace drive and his hopes that

new chapters in inter-Arab relations would open.

The King also telephoned Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh informing them of Jordan's full support of the peace plan and hoping peace in the Gulf will help "restore Arab solidarity," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. The King also exchanged views over developments in the region with former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Petra said.

The King told the ambassadors

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King pays tribute to Rafsanjani

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Friday sent a cable to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani thanking him for his efforts aimed at ending the Gulf war and reaching a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

King Hussein expressed appreciation of Mr. Rafsanjani's contribution to peace efforts and to crystallising them into the Soviet peace plan, "which we consider a distinguished achievement and a positive step towards what we all aspire to — assuring security and peace in the Gulf region."

"The Soviet peace plan and Iraq's acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 have brought all the parties to the conflict to a historical point where they can choose to have war or peace," King Hussein said. "Iran's efforts, stemming from its keen interest on safeguarding higher Islamic interests, will be appreciated by everyone," he added.

U.N. on standby

Combined agency dispatches

THE U.N. Security Council, which for months has played a key role in the Gulf crisis, waited and watched on the sidelines Friday as Moscow, Washington and Baghdad engaged in diplomatic dance about peace plans.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar praised the Soviet Union "for having made such an important effort" with a peace plan it put forth and said he considered Iraq's willingness to withdraw from Kuwait "really very, very important."

But all eyes were on the 15 members of the Security Council, who authorised the resolutions that led to the military action against Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait last August.

Ambassadors of the council members were on standby waiting to be briefed by the Soviet Union on the latest details of its peace plan negotiated in Moscow with Iraq's foreign minister. Diplomats said, however, that Western objections to the plan could stall any moves for a cease-fire.

The council is expected at some point to consider calling for a cease-fire, a lifting of sanctions against Iraq and authorisation of a U.N. peacekeeping force to monitor an Iraqi and allied pull-out from the Gulf region.

U.N. officials, meanwhile, have been drawing up contingency plans for a peacekeeping role that could include supervision of troop withdrawals, possible creation of a buffer force, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and refugee aid.

Diplomats said council consultations could continue for several days until Iraq's U.N. ambassador returns from consultations in Moscow with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. Soviet Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov was expected to call a meeting or at least informal consultations at which time the United States and other allies were expected to present their conditions for peace. But diplomats said Mr. Vorontsov had not yet received instructions from Moscow.

There was uncertainty about what the council could do even after it was briefed on the Soviet proposals.

"Any ceasefire will have to come from the allied coalition fighting the war," said a Western diplomat on the council. "The United Nations authorised war, it didn't declare war on Iraq so it can't declare a ceasefire either."

Another said he believed the Soviet plan "was the beginning of the end but only the beginning of it's quite a long end." China, one of the council's five permanent members with veto power, said it had always stood for unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait and for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf

Bush wants Iraq to begin pullout by today evening

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — President George Bush Friday brushed off a Soviet plan for peace in the Gulf and demanded that Iraq start pulling out of Kuwait unconditionally by noon EST (1700 GMT) Saturday under threat of an imminent ground attack by the allies.

The ultimatum gives Iraq one week to withdraw all of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi troops that have occupied Kuwait since last Aug. 2.

The allies want a tight timeframe for withdrawal to force Iraq to leave tanks, heavy artillery and other weapons behind and thus reduce Baghdad's future military power.

Angry accusing Iraq of starting a "scorched-earth policy" by torching Kuwaiti oil resources, Mr. Bush issued the ultimatum after hurried overnight consultations with all U.S. allies in the Gulf war.

"The coalition will give Saddam Hussein until noon Saturday to do what he must do — begin his immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait," the president said in a statement read to reporters in the White House Rose Garden.

The White House specified later that Mr. Bush meant noon Saturday Washington time — 8 p.m. local time in Baghdad.

Mr. Bush left it to spokesmen

Martin Fitzwater to read the very detailed withdrawal terms within the ultimatum, which said Iraq's choice was to comply or face a land war against the Western Arab allies who now have about 735,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen deployed in the Gulf region.

"We are holding off on the ground war pending this opportunity, and we will wait and see what happens and then make those decisions (on an invasion)," Mr. Fitzwater said.

Pressed on whether that meant the land war would start automatically on Saturday if Iraq ignored the deadline, he dodged a specific reply, saying:

"We obviously are not going to telegraph in advance what we're going to start the ground force actions. We want to give (Iraq) the opportunity to take advantage of this... offer."

U.S. military spokesman said again Friday that coalition forces were primed and ready to invade on signal.

The U.S. terms were given to Iraqi diplomats in Washington. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev telephoned Mr. Bush Thursday evening Washington time to outline an eight-point peace plan including a "full and unconditional withdrawal" which he said Iraq had accepted in principle.

"The Soviet announcement

(Continued on page 5)

Libya to accept stranded Gazans

By S. Rajashri and P.V. Vivekanand

AMMAN — Libya has offered to accept Palestinian residents of Kuwait who are stranded in the emirate as a result of non-recognition of their travel documents by Egypt and the Israeli occupation authorities, informed sources said Friday. The Libyan move came in response to intervention by Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the sources said. It was not immediately known what kind of arrangement Libya was offering.

"We have been informed that Libya is willing to accept all Arabs, particularly Palestinians from Gaza, who are denied entry to other countries because of non-recognition of travel documents," said one of the sources. "Arrangements are being made to set up passage for those who wish to go to Libya," added the source. Jordan will be issuing its own laissez passer to those who wish to take advantage of the Libyan offer, the source said. The first of such documents

was issued Wednesday to a Gazan who originally held Egyptian documents and he is expected to leave for Libya this week. A copy of the three-month-valid document made available to the Jordan Times indicated that he had entered Jordan on Nov. 17, 1990.

The source said the Gazan had travelled to Egypt on his original laissez passer, but the Egyptian authorities had confiscated the document and expelled him back to Jordan. Libyan diplomats in Amman were not immediately available for comment, but a North African source confirmed that Tripoli had conveyed its position to its partners in the Arab Maghreb Union — Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania — during a recent meeting of their foreign ministers.

"It was widely welcomed by all members of the union," said the source. "The Libyans said they were also ready to accept Somalis and nationals of

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Bashir ends visit, lauds Jordan's stand

AMMAN (Petra) — Sudan's head of state Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Al Bashir Friday concluded a two-day visit to Jordan during which he held talks with His Majesty King Hussein on the latest developments in the Gulf war and the efforts made to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Gen. Bashir was seen off at the airport by King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Mudar Badran and senior civil and military officials.

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PLO hails Iraqi acceptance of Soviet plan, says linkage exists

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE SOVIET UNION's eight-point plan to stop the war in the Gulf drew a positive, albeit guarded, response from Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials, although it does not include any reference to solving the Palestinian problem.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was quoted Friday as saying Iraq's acceptance of the Soviet plan to end the Gulf war is what his organisation was "aspiring to" and should be examined by the United Nations and not the United States.

In a brief statement in Tunis, Mr. Arafat said that the Iraqi move indicated a "positive atti-

tude," without making any reference to the absence of linkage between solutions to the Gulf crisis and the Palestine issue.

Analysts and observers could not explain why Mr. Arafat did not mention what appeared to be a concession on the Iraqi part. However, a senior aide to Mr. Arafat said that "the Iraqi acceptance (of the Soviet plan) based on the initial Iraqi proposal (of Feb. 15) to withdraw from Kuwait is a clear test of the intentions of the U.S.-led coalition and its compliance with U.N. resolutions."

Bassam Abu Sharif, political adviser to the PLO chairman, told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview from Tunis that the Iraqi acceptance had opened "the door wide for the establishment of a stable and secure Middle East."

Mr. Abu Sharif stressed the PLO's belief that linkage between the Gulf crisis and the Palestine issue was a political tool used to highlight the double standards of the West in dealing with the region's problems.

While saying that the word "connection" — rather than linkage — described the PLO's outlook on the Iraqi demands for a simultaneous withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait and Israel from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Mr. Abu Sharif stressed that it was only a political link.

"The connection between the Gulf crisis and the Middle East

(Continued on page 5)

Baghdad over the weekend — mood of expectation, defiance and hope

From Lami K. Andoni in Baghdad

AN UNEASY atmosphere of expectation prevailed in Baghdad most of Thursday, Iraqis were aware that the next day — if not the next few hours — would be decisive in determining the course of war or peace.

Then, in his broadcast to the nation and Muslim World that evening, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said Iraq would not surrender to the United States-led coalition and that the five-week-old Gulf war was heading for the "mother of all battles."

"They want us to surrender, but of course they'll be disappointed," the Iraqi leader said, but made no reference to a Soviet peace proposal.

The Iraqi leadership's announcement Tuesday that it was studying the Soviet proposal had provided hope for Iraqis that their suffering might soon be over. But they were also aware that coalition forces were poised for a ground assault and that prospects for a cease-fire may be a mirage.

The Iraqi news media's reference to the Soviet proposal was reported prominently but in noncommittal fashion. At press time, Iraqis were awaiting the response from Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, who was en route to Moscow.

"People are full of hope," said Nouri, an Iraqi taxi driver. Markets were open, while ven-

dors set up food stalls along the sidewalks. Except for fuel and medicine, most items were available, although very expensive.

Without electricity and running water, life has become very difficult for Iraqis. But they say, the hardest part is the feeling that civilian areas are not safe. This concern was reinforced last week when coalition forces bombed a public shelter killing hundreds of people. The Pentagon claimed the facility was a military bunker, but citizens in Baghdad were not willing to accept this claim.

"This is nonsense. They are liars. Why are they bombing

(Continued on page 5)

Iraq rejects U.S. deadline, edges closer to Soviet plan

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ ON FRIDAY brushed aside as "shameful" a U.S. ultimatum demanding it start withdrawing its troops from Kuwait Saturday.

Iraq's Ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) backed a Soviet initiative under which it would only start withdrawing after a ceasefire and which would give its troops 21 days — three times as long as under the U.S. timetable — to leave the emirate.

"We confirm that Iraq wants peace and is working seriously to support the Soviet initiative and facilitate its success, but not out of fear of (U.S. President George) Bush's threat," the RCC said in a statement.

The RCC denied accusations made by Mr. Bush that Iraq was pursuing a "scorched-earth policy" in Kuwait, deliberately destroying oil and economic installations in the emirate. It called for the formation of a United Nations committee to probe into these charges.

The statement was aired in Arabic on Baghdad Radio, while an Information Ministry official

read a shorter version in English to reporters at Baghdad's Al Rashid hotel.

"Iraq is for peace and is working to facilitate the success of the Soviet initiative," the statement said. Mr. Bush, it said, is responding to the Iraqi offers with "a shameful ultimatum."

"Bush might have been easy to adopt a stance so he may enjoy his weekend holiday," the statement said. It added that the U.S. president's latest threat reflected the "evil intentions and desire for the continuation of the aggression."

"We don't know if Bush wanted from this shameful ultimatum to give the illusion that the (Soviet) peace initiative was due to his ultimatums or that he wanted to give the illusion to the world that he and his failing allied had defeated Iraq," the RCC said.

"All he has done, he and his allies, since the night of January 16/17 (when the Gulf war started) until now, has done nothing more than unleash his ravens to implement a cowardly plan to destroy the properties of Iraq's innocent civilians."

The RCC denounced Mr. Bush for suggesting there was a conflict between President Saddam Hussein's speech Thursday and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz's stance in Moscow negotiations.

"Tariq Aziz is authorised by His Excellency leader President Saddam Hussein to commit himself to what he sees fit and to what will be agreed upon with the Soviets regarding their peace initiative."

Accusing the U.S. and allied forces of pursuing bombing raids, Iraq demanded: "Where is the ceasefire agreement... did Bush imagine that Iraq would be silent at a time when he launches aggression and rambles in his childish statements?"

Reading from a prepared text in English, the information official who was not identified rejected Mr. Bush's accusations that Iraq had begun a "scorched-earth policy against Kuwait," destroying key economic installations in the emirate.

The Iraqi spokesman suggested that a United Nations team be dispatched to Iraq and Kuwait to inspect the damage, which he said was caused by the allied air war,

Allies press ahead with assault plans

Combined agency dispatches

ALLIED FORCES pushed ahead Friday with preparations for a ground offensive despite Iraq's positive response to a Soviet peace initiative.

Forces rained bombs and artillery shells on Iraqi positions along the northern desert front and the capital, Baghdad.

Epidemics are sweeping the southern Iraqi city of Basra and 60 per cent of its two million population have fled from allied bombs, according to refugees reaching nearby Iran.

The Iranian news agency IRNA, reporting from the Iranian frontier town of Ahvaz, east of Basra, quoted refugees as saying that contaminated water had brought an outbreak of diarrhoea and other diseases.

Basra, Iraq's second biggest city and a large garrison, has been the target of daily allied raids since the Gulf war began on Jan. 17.

One refugee, Ahmad Nosrat Hussein, 27, told IRNA he had seen women and children mutilated by the air raids and that damage included bridges, industrial centres and some civilian targets.

Despite denials by allied military officials, Baghdad Radio said that as far as Iraq was concerned, the ground war had begun. In a commentary, it said Iraqi troops would "rub the aggressors' noses in the mud of defeat."

A military communiqué said Iraqi forces repulsed a three-pronged land assault across the Saudi-Iraqi border.

The allies have escalated probing attacks along the front in recent days in preparation for the long-heralded ground offensive. But Baghdad apparently has interpreted the latest land assaults

to mean the final showdown has begun.

A military communiqué said an assault by a British armoured division on Thursday was crushed. But it added that the "enemy continued to engage our forces with fire."

"At 0915 today, the enemy forces carried out preparatory bombardment of our forces accompanied by a new attempt to attack our forces in the same sector."

"This unequivocally means that the enemy has started the ground battle. Yes, the ground battle has begun in view of the size of the enemy offensive, the goals he seeks to achieve and the course of the battle," the radio said.

A military communiqué said that after day-long fighting, "the situation has settled in favour of our heroic armed forces." It said the enemy suffered "massive casualties," and that some units were forced to retreat into Saudi Arabia before the battle was over.

An earlier statement by the armed forces general command reported that Iraqi ground defences had repulsed a British air attack and downed five aircraft Thursday. It said a total of 23 British sorties had been flown over civilian areas.

Baghdad Radio beld the United States, its allies and agents "responsible for this grave development which will wipe out all the peace opportunities that Iraq had welcomed."

A senior U.S. military spokesman denied the Iraqi military statement that the ground war had begun.

American casualties mounted, meanwhile, with the loss of seven soldiers in the crash of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

Gulf ground war could be bloody, frustrating for allies

By Charles Aldinger
Reuter

WASHINGTON — A ground war for control of Kuwait, which seems increasingly likely, could be a frustrating, bloody affair despite weeks of punishing allied air attacks against entrenched Iraqi troops, U.S. military officials say.

Even if American-led coalition forces use speedy armoured columns and highly mobile airborne and amphibious troops in coordinated drives to encircle Iraqi troops and artillery, close combat will take a toll on the attackers.

"It's not going to be a snap war is a bloody thing," army Lieutenant-General Tom Kelly, a senior official with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters this week.

"I can still draw up 15 scenarios every day that will cause us a lot of problems," Gulf U.S. commander General Norman Schwarzkopf told the Los Angeles Times newspaper.

Senior Pentagon officials, who asked not to be identified, stressed there were still a half-million Iraqi troops in and near Kuwait and that minefields, chemical artillery shells, tanks and bunkers were likely to slow and frustrate the allies.

"Even if you don't take them head-on, it will probably be frustrating at points to say the least. Don't look for this thing to be over in a week," said one of the officials.

The officials refused to give any hint at the timing for a ground war after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein vowed in a

speech on Thursday that his country would continue the struggle in the Gulf war, confident of victory.

At the White House, spokesman Martin Fitzwater implied President George Bush had not yet made a final decision on when to launch a ground offensive.

When and if Mr. Bush gives the order for the attack by elements of a 700,000-strong coalition force, it is expected to result in an attempt to encircle, divide and conquer rather than a broad, head-on charge against entrenched Iraqis.

Instead of thrusting whole allied divisions across 160 kilometres of Saudi border into Kuwait at once, defence officials have indicated that a ground war would begin at several points, including an amphibious landing in northeastern Kuwait and a strike into southern Iraq west of Kuwait.

The attack could come as early as this week, the same week that U.S. marines 46 years ago launched an attack on the Japanese-occupied island of Iwo Jima in the Pacific. Those forces had been softened by a massive air and naval bombardment, but the attackers suffered nearly 23,000 dead and wounded in capturing the jungle island during World War II.

All but about 200 of the 23,000 Japanese defenders died, many in suicide attacks.

Major-General Harry Jenkins, commander of a 17,000-man U.S. marine amphibious force in the Gulf, told reporters on Wednesday in any risky assault on the

beaches of Kuwait.

He said aboard the command ship USS Nassau in the Gulf that an amphibious landing would likely cause substantial damage to civilian property on the coastline.

Gen. Jenkins, who commands an amphibious force that has been at sea for six months, said possible operation for his troops included a full-scale landing, one or more limited operations or even a decoy assault or feint to tie down coastal defence troops while allied ground forces launched attacks elsewhere.

He said that much of the Kuwaiti coastline is urban and that buildings, many of them fortified by Iraqi troops, would be targets for naval gunfire and air strikes before marines hit the beach.

In Saudi Arabia on Thursday, U.S. Marine Brigadier-General Richard Neal suggested that fighting to liberate Kuwait City, for example, could be very difficult.

"They (Iraqis) have woven themselves into the very fabric and structure of Kuwait City," he told reporters.

U.S. Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Colin Powell and his Gulf commanders stress that mobility and air power are keys to isolating and chopping up Iraqi defenders, many of them in underground bunkers.

"I'm not going to go stupidly into what Iraq believes is its strength... we will go against (its) weakness as far as our strengths," Sen. Powell told reporters returning with him from a visit to Saudi Arabia last month.

Iraqi mines, air force' still big threat'

ABOARD DUTCH FRIGATE (R) — A Gulf allied naval commander says mines at sea and Iraq's surviving air force, much of it now in Iran, remain serious threats to allied ships as long as the Gulf war lasts.

Captain Pieter Kok, commander of the three ships operating with the main U.S. carrier task force in the Gulf, said that monitoring planes which had fled the war zone into Iran was a main concern of the allied navies.

"The air force of Iraq has not been fully destroyed. It is still there. The better part has been evacuated to Iran for as yet unknown purposes," he said in an interview on his flagship, the Dutch warship Jacob Van Heemskerck.

Iran, neutral in the conflict, has officially confirmed that 22 Iraqi warplanes have taken refuge in Iran and has repeatedly said it will keep all these planes until the end of the war.

However, allied commanders say over 140 planes, including Iraq's best warplanes, have been seen on radar fleeing to Iran.

Neither Iran, nor Iraq, has given a firm reason for the mass flight of Iraq's air force and the allies remain uneasy about the large number of its combat planes in Iran within easy striking distance of the large naval forces in the Gulf.

Diplomats in Tehran, however, believe Iran would not want to spoil its carefully constructed neutral image by allowing Iraqi planes to operate out of its territory.

One senior Western diplomat suggested another reason for the difference in numbers: "If you admit only 22 planes, then at the end of the war you only have to give 22 planes back."

Some diplomats believe Tehran might keep some of the Iraqi planes as delayed reparations for Iraq's 1980 invasion of Iran.

Capt. Kok said allied radar had detected the Iraqi planes flying from base to base in Iran. A surprise Iraqi attack was not likely, but bad to be considered seriously, he said.

High Iranian mountains parallel to the Gulf could allow low-flying planes to sneak up undetected and cut down the time allied air-defence ships would have to respond.

"You can't look through the mountains with your AWACS (early warning radar planes). They could follow an overland route, fly low behind the mountains, let's say without the consent of Iran, turn right, and we would have two minutes warning," he said.

Two minutes would be enough "but it would be hectic," he said. Capt. Kok said U.S. commanders had also asked the Dutch navy to send more minesweepers after two U.S. warships were damaged by floating mines in the Gulf this week, the first such incident of the war.

West European navies have most of the minesweepers in the NATO Western military alliance. vehicles and kill them. But in close contact fighting with tanks, we must have a positive identification.

One method, he said, was for one helicopter to fly forward and make an identification while another remained farther back, ultimately to fire if a target proved to be the enemy.

Asked if it was easy for helicopters to get confused in the heat of battle, he said that "the Apache always knows where it is, and where the edge of the American forces are. Those are precise measurements. I have a high confidence we won't shoot coalition forces."

75,000 arrested in three-year uprising

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel has arrested 75,000 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 38-month-old revolt against Israeli rule and prosecuted 45,000 of them, according to the chief military prosecutor.

Brigadier General Amnon Strashnov told Israel Television a total of 14,000 Palestinians had been held in "administrative detention" since the start of the intifada.

Some 4,000 Palestinians are in "administrative detention now," Gen. Strashnov said. Administrative detention, which dates from the British mandate, allows civilians to be held in prison for up to six months without charge.

An Israeli from the West Bank settlement of Taqwa was arrested Wednesday on suspicion he shot dead a 15-year-old Palestinian youth earlier in the week on the outskirts of Bethlehem, sources said.

The youth, Salem Jalal Musleh, was shot in the head Monday evening by a settler who opened fire after his car was hit by stones when he drove through the West Bank village of Beit Sahour, according to local residents.

Musleh's death brought to 771 the number of Palestinians killed by Israelis in the occupied territories since the uprising began.

With world attention glued to the Gulf war, Israel is cracking down on Arabic newspapers in the occupied territories, Palestinian journalists said.

Applying military orders with

renewed vigour, authorities have detained journalists without trial, closed press offices and tightened censorship, they said.

At least six press offices have been closed for one to two years in the past two weeks. The latest order was issued on Thursday against the Al Iman office in Hebron, they said.

"Israel has dramatically increased restrictions on the press since the war. It seems they have declared a state of emergency against the press," said Hanna Amireh, a board member of the Arab Journalists Association.

"They have closed down four press offices in four days. There is a concentrated campaign to suppress sources of information," said Hanna Siniora, editor of the daily Al Fajr.

Mr. Amireh said the campaign appeared aimed at curtailing coverage of the West Bank and Gaza Strip where the Israeli army has enforced a partial curfew since the Gulf war began.

Israel has severely restricted access to the occupied territories by foreign journalists based in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Israeli authorities are holding at least 28 Palestinian journalists, including 18 without trial, Palestinians said.

Taber Shireh, 30, a part-time correspondent in Gaza for Reuters and other international news organisations, has been in detention since Jan. 28. Mr. Shireh's defence lawyer says he is being questioned about his news sources.

CIA sees more Iraqi tanks left than does Pentagon

By Ruth Sinai
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates that 10 to 15 per cent of Iraq's tanks and artillery in Kuwait have been destroyed by allied bombing, intelligence sources said Thursday, far below the Defence Department's 35 per cent figure.

The discrepancy is the result of different tools and philosophies used in assessing the damage, said officials who describe the CIA figures as a "worst-case scenario."

The extent of the damage will help determine how many U.S. troops sustain once they mount a ground offensive on Kuwait.

U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia said Thursday that about 300,000 of Iraq's troops in the Kuwaiti theatre still appear to be in fighting form.

The CIA and defence intelligence agencies base their damage assessments on photographs taken by reconnaissance planes and spy satellites, as well as on intercepted enemy communications. The Pentagon's figures are provided by the central command in Saudi Arabia, and include aerial reconnaissance data as well as pilot reports of their missions.

At central command, "they're looking at more data," said one official familiar with the process of bomb damage assessment. "The numbers aren't, and shouldn't be, comparable."

He said the CIA and defence intelligence contribute to the central command assessment by providing their own estimates as well as raw data. Central command, in turn, sends its data back to Washington.

Both sets of figures are presented to President George Bush daily, he said.

"There may be some differences but there's no bureaucratic war over this. The system works very well," he said.

The national intelligence agencies estimate that 10 to 15 per cent of Iraq's tanks, artillery and armoured personnel carriers in Kuwait and southern Iraq have

been rendered inoperable, said another intelligence source who spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The intelligence agencies also say that despite the bombings, Iraq laid down sufficient underground cables and set up enough duplicate networks that field commanders still can communicate with Baghdad and among themselves.

The Pentagon reported Thursday that bombing had destroyed 1,100 of Iraq's estimated 4,200 tanks, 1,200 of its 3,110 artillery pieces, and 800 of its 2,870 armoured personnel carriers.

Still, said Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, "it is essential... that we not underestimate the remaining capability of the Iraqi forces."

Israeli intelligence reports say about 20 per cent of Iraq's weaponry in the Kuwaiti theatre has been destroyed. Officials say Israel only considers a tank or artillery piece destroyed if photos or other information determines it is inoperable.

"We only consider reports of targets killed. They (the United States) also take into account targets hit," said one official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens told Mr. Cheney last week that Israel's estimates of the number of Scud missile launchers in western Iraq are higher than the American estimates, officials say.

"The question is to what extent Centcom discounts pilot enthusiasm," said Jeffrey Richelson, an expert on spy satellites and aerial reconnaissance. "Pilots aren't there when the smoke clears. Satellites are."

Howard Teicher, who served as director of Middle Eastern affairs at the National Security Council until 1989, said central command probably has a better picture of the damage.

"They're the ones whose lives are on the line," he said. "The whole world is watching. It's not like the jungles of Vietnam" where the Pentagon provided inflated assessments of damage to the North Vietnamese, he said.

In Washington "you often have bureaucratic differences" like these, he said.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Saddam outlined his strategy in 1977 book

HAMBURG, Germany (R) — Thirteen years before the Gulf war, Saddam Hussein wrote a book outlining his strategy for uniting Arabs. In excerpts printed in the latest edition of Hamburg's Rundschau magazine, President Saddam, then a member of Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, listed three main principles. "We believe in a policy of international tension and preparation for war," President Saddam wrote in "Unser Kampf" (Our Struggle), published in Iraq and Switzerland in 1977. Through this policy of tension, the Arab World would gain a stronger sense of belonging. "We believe that in times of tension, the Arabs find their unity again," President Saddam wrote. The second main point was to divide Europe, the United States and Japan over their oil policies. "The more centres of power, the bigger becomes our sphere of influence." Explosion of the Jews and establishment of a Palestinian state in place of Israel, was the third aim of the plan. The magazine said the book had gone unmentioned by politicians and experts while President Saddam had led Iraq in an eight-year war with Iran and now against the U.S.-led coalition.

Qadhafi more critical of allies

PARIS (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has adopted a more "critical" approach to members of the allied coalition, a French envoy returning from Libya said Thursday. Michael Vauzelle, president of the French parliament's foreign affairs commission, said the two men discussed the repercussions of the Gulf war on ties between the Arab World and Europe in Benghazi Wednesday. "Qadhafi said Iraq's acceptance of negotiations based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 would lead Libya to move from what he considered a moderate stance to a more critical position towards coalition member states," Mr. Vauzelle said in a statement. In a radio interview Wednesday Colonel Qadhafi warned of a "revolution from the Gulf to the Atlantic" if Iraq was crushed despite its readiness to leave Kuwait.

Algiers shops strike to back Iraq

ALGIERS (R) — Hundreds of shops remained shut in Algiers Thursday in a protest against the U.S.-led campaign against Iraq. The one-day strike, organised by the General Union of Algerian Merchants, began with a march by several hundred shopkeepers to the local headquarters of the United Nations. "Enough butchery by the allies of the devil," said one banner denouncing allied bombardment of Iraq. "With our souls and blood we will sacrifice for you Iraq," shouted the marchers, bearing Iraqi and Algerian flags. A union delegation delivered a statement to the U.N. office demanding a halt in the war. A union official said it had opened a bank account for cash donations to Iraq that had already netted 30 million dinars (\$1.6 million).

South Korean planes leave for Gulf

SEOUL (AP) — Three South Korean air force C-130 transport planes left for the Gulf Friday after delays created by India's refusal to permit flyovers, the Foreign Ministry said. Officials refused to say what route the three planes would fly, saying that Seoul agreed not to disclose route details at the request of foreign countries involved. Last Wednesday, Korean officials said that India abruptly banned the use of its bases for refuelling of air force rights by foreign planes participating in the Gulf war.

Keepers of 'doomsday clock' eye Gulf

CHICAGO (R) — The guardians of the "doomsday clock" say they are keeping a nervous watch on the Gulf war but have no immediate plans to move the hands of the disaster symbol. Since 1947 the clock has tracked the world's "nuclear tension" and appears on the cover of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and hangs on the wall of the offices of the magazine on the University of Chicago campus. Moving the hands has been "under discussion," said Len Ackland, editor of the journal Thursday before the flurry of diplomatic activity over a Soviet peace plan for the Gulf. "If a ground war results in a terribly foolish and disastrous decision by the administration to use tactical nuclear weapons, I'm sure we'd have a response," he told Reuters. "The real focus of the magazine and the clock are moves toward or away from global nuclear catastrophe," he said. The hands of the clock were last moved a year ago following the end of the cold war. The hands were set at 10 minutes to midnight, four minutes farther away from the zero hour denoting holocaust. Since it was devised the hands of the clock have been as close to midnight as two minutes, and as far away as 12.

German Greens' spokesman quits

BONN (R) — A spokesman for Germany's radical Greens party said Thursday he would resign after being quoted as saying Iraqi missile attacks on Israel were the logical consequence of the Jewish state's policy towards its Arab neighbours. Christian Stroebel told a radio interviewer by telephone from Israel he was quitting because misunderstandings over his remarks meant he could no longer represent the Greens effectively. The Jerusalem Post quoted Mr. Stroebel Tuesday as saying: "Iraq's attacks on Israel are the logical, almost compelling consequence of Israel's policies vis-a-vis the Palestinians and the Arabs states, including Iraq." Mr. Stroebel said he had been misquoted and regarded the missile attacks as a terrible crime, but it had proved almost impossible to correct the impression given by the interview. Israeli politicians have snubbed a Greens delegation now visiting the Jewish state because of the interview.

Iraqi diplomat ordered to leave U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department has ordered one of the four Iraqi diplomats still in Washington to leave the United States, it was learned Thursday night. No reason was given for the expulsion, but the order was cast in terms normally used in espionage cases. The diplomat, the third secretary in the Iraqi embassy, was ordered to leave the United States by midnight Saturday. The department did not identify him by name. "The decision relates to his activities," said Richard Boucher, a State Department spokesman. Iraq has broken relations with the United States. Even so, and despite an ongoing war, four Iraqi diplomats were permitted to remain in Washington. All U.S. diplomats have been withdrawn from Baghdad. Khalid Shewashay, who is in charge of the Iraqi embassy, was notified of the order, Mr. Boucher said.

7 U.S. soldiers killed

RIYADH (AP) — A U.S. army helicopter on a medical evacuation mission crashed in bad weather in western Saudi Arabia, killing seven soldiers, the U.S. command said early Friday.

A statement by the command provided few details of the crash, which happened before dawn Thursday. The area where it occurred has been hit in recent days by a series of shamals, or sandstorms, that typically occur this time of year.

According to unofficial records, the crash was the deadliest U.S. non-combat air crash since the allies began bombing Iraqi forces on Jan. 17, and raised the number of airmen killed in non-combat incidents to 22.

In the worst previous accident, the crash of a Marine Corps UH-1 Huey helicopter on Feb. 1 killed four crewmen.

In an accident that occurred before the allied bombing campaign began, a U.S. C-54 cargo plane crashed on Aug. 29 while taking off from Ramstein air base in West Germany, killing 13 of 17 people aboard. The plane had been headed to the Gulf region.

An investigation of the crash was under way, the command said.

U.S. soldiers rob car crash victims

NEAR THE SAUDI BORDER (R) — War has brutalised at least some of the U.S. soldiers fighting in Operation Desert Storm, according to Staff Sergeant Joe Ray.

He said he was driving along the main supply route towards the Gulf war front lines two weeks ago when he had to swerve off the road to avoid an oncoming tanker truck.

The vehicle behind him — the new version of the army jeep known as Humvee — hit a concrete drainage ditch and rolled over.

TBE passenger, a woman soldier, was thrown through the windshield while the driver remained trapped inside the wreck.

Sgt. Ray, who is assigned to the vehicle pool of the 13th evacuation hospital, wrapped the woman in a sleeping bag and was about to pull the driver from the Humvee when a bus pulled up.

Several GIs got out but none offered to help. Instead, they began looting the Humvee, Sgt. Ray said.

One soldier, he recalled, tried to lift the driver's legs to take packs of cigarettes. Others began to drag off the sleeping bag. "I don't think they realised that she was in it," Sgt. Ray said.

"When she said something — she was conscious the whole time — they just looked at her."

The GIs only let go of the sleeping bag when Sgt. Ray loaded his M-16 and threatened to open fire. Then, ran for the bus. He said he could not identify to which unit they belonged.

"How can you tell people that Americans are treating Americans like that?"

"It just makes my heart ache... I can't think of any reason people would act like that."

An ambulance was waved down to take the two soldiers to a nearby hospital. They survived the crash.

Sgt. Ray, 41, from Madison, Wisconsin, was appalled.

"You see people in need and what do you do? You want to steal sleeping bags? I can expect that from my enemy but, damn, I don't expect that from Americans."

Sgt. Ray would like to see the incident as an isolated aberration. But he has travelled the Saudi highways as far north as Jordan and has seen frequent scenes of soldiers — Americans and others — stripping vehicles.

"There's callousness here. I just don't understand where it came from."

Apache chief fired after 'friendly fire'

SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — The commander of a battalion of Apache helicopters has been relieved of his post after he mistakenly fired on two U.S. armoured vehicles, killing two American soldiers, officials said Thursday.

Officers in the division said army Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Hayles had violated division guidelines that commanding officers were not to personally engage enemy forces.

Col. Hayles had been flying the Apache with the same crewmen for 15 months. He had been involved in aviation modernisation for 12 years in the army. The two American soldiers

were killed Sunday while a division task force was conducting screening operations just inside the Iraqi border and was attacked by an armoured column. U.S. troops returned fire with tow missiles and artillery, then called in the Apaches for closer support.

Two Iraqi tanks were reported destroyed. There were no American casualties at the hands of the Apaches. Six soldiers were wounded.

The division said in a statement released at the time that the Apache crew "is a well disciplined and trained crew."

In an interview last month, Col. Hayles said aggressive use of the Apache would ultimately re-

duce American battlefield casualties.

"I think opportunities exist to use the Apache right from the start," he said. "I think we have a big licence to go out there and maximise our technological advantages to minimise casualties. I'd like to see some bold use of the Apaches."

Col. Hayles said in the same interview last month that the U.S.-led coalition was employing a variety of methods to prevent mistaken fire.

"We have two methods of fire control," he said. "If we fly beyond where friendly forces are, the vehicles are in enemy territory, a free fire zone, and we see

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

04:50 Fajr
06:08 (Sunrise) Duha
11:49 Dhuhr
15:00 'Asr
17:30 Maghrib
18:48 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweith, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 511225
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 515817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy to cloudy at times, and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman 8 / 18
Aqaba 12 / 25
Deserts 7 / 20
Jordan Valley 14 / 24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Am-

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Adel Amari 812148
Dr. Salah Al'Usoud 649028
Dr. Ahmad Orshan 783384
Dr. Tawfiq Qab'In 623029
Firm pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence immediate 630341
Rescue 630341

Civil Defence

Rescue Police 199
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 608080
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/22
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akleh Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 6641714

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 550 / 480

Shamsani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushtari Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66512737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marha 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
Zargo Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zargo National Hospital (09)991071
Jn Sina Hospital (09)986732
IBRD:
Princess Bas

Parliamentarians to try to reverse Turkish, Pakistani stand on war

AMMAN (J.T.) — It is hoped that Turkey will re-consider its present policy with regard to the Gulf war and refrain from allowing America to use Turkish territory from which to raid Iraq, said Dr. Ishaq Al Farhan, member of the Upper House of Parliament.

DR. Farhan, who left Amman as the head of a Jordanian parliamentary delegation for visits to Turkey and Pakistan, said that he would hold talks not only with government officials in the two countries but also with parliamentarians to discuss the Gulf situation.

The delegation's visit was to have taken place two days earlier jointly with a Palestinian delegation, but due to last-minute complications the visit was deferred. Farhan is accompanied by two deputies: Dr. Ali Al Faqir and Fadi Al Khalafat and carrying a message from the Speaker of the

Lower House of Parliament, Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, to the speakers of the Pakistani and Turkish parliaments. The message deals with the Gulf issue, Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the war, and efforts for settling the crisis through peaceful negotiations.

Farhan said in a statement before his departure that he would explain to the leaders and parliamentarians of the two countries that world Zionism would be the only beneficiary of the devastating war on Iraq and he would stress that the Arab and Islamic nations should remain united in the face of attempts to impose foreign domination on the Arab and Islamic countries.

Farhan expressed hope that the contacts would result in a decision by Pakistan to pull out its troops from the coalition now deployed in the Arabian Peninsula.

Jordanian wants to expose Bush as international cowboy criminal

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fawzi Muhtaseb lost his wife and five children last week when the U.S.-allied planes bombed the Amriyeh shelter in Baghdad, and his family vowed to sue President George Bush and his government for what they believe was a crime.

The lawyer representing the Jordanian family said on Thursday that the U.S. government, headed by Bush, was responsible for the death of six members of the Muhtaseb family and other civilian families, and that the American president must be brought to justice.

"Those responsible must be brought to justice for the inhuman and vicious crime against the Muhtaseb family, which killed those children and their mother, along with hundreds of civilians at the shelter last week," said attorney Azmi Muhtaseb, who is also a relative of the victims.

Speaking at a press conference at the parliament building, the lawyer said that they would not ask for material compensation. "We want the simple things: To bring this man (Bush) before the world and show the crime he and his allies have committed. We want to see him for the sake of the (Arab) Nation, not just for the sake of the family," he said.

He added that he would study the case well and prepare to sue the American government and its president "to see if there is any justice and humanity left in international law."

Mr. Muhtaseb accused the American government and their allies of lying about the Amriyeh shelter, saying that there "was nothing military" about it and that it only sheltered civilians escaping U.S.-allied bombardment.

The Americans, he said, only believed in "their cowboy policy with total disregard to humanity."

"Stop this filthy and vicious cowboy war," Mr. Muhtaseb pleaded.

The lawyer also criticised the Arab allies of the U.S. for lying about the shelter. "We all hoped to be martyrs before we heard an Arab voice say that the shelter was a military bunker."

"As an Arab Muslim, I feel proud that my family fell martyrs at the hands of the American aggressors," said Fawzi, the surviving father of five victims.

He explained that his family moved to Amriyeh in Baghdad from Kuwait where they had lived for many years when the Gulf crisis broke out last August "to finalise some business."

When the allied aggression on the Iraqi capital started, Fawzi sent his wife and children to the Amriyeh shelter every day at five in the evening where they remained until seven the next morning.

"I spent the night at home. All of us did that: We would send our wives and children and old people for protection from the bombardment to that shelter every day," said Fawzi.

He added that there were never any military personnel there and accused the U.S. and their allies of lying about such claims.

"When my wife and children did not come home the next morning, on Feb. 13, I went to the shelter and found it was flattened to the ground," said the soft-spoken father.

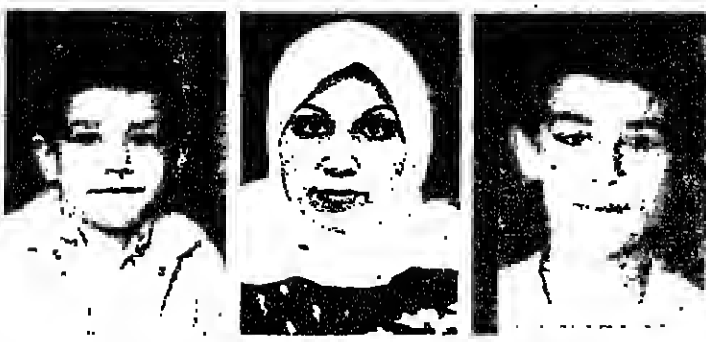
When asked if he would identify the corpses of his family, he just replied, "no," and was unable to elaborate.

There has been no official figure provided on the number of



IN SUPPORT OF IRAQ: Her Majesty Queen Noor Thursday evening attended a folklore and cultural performance at the Al Hussein Youth City organised by local charitable and folkloric organisations. Proceeds of the performance, which included national songs and dabkeh dances as well as other folkloric activities, would go to a special

committee set up to channel contributions to the Iraqi people and the Jordanian People's Army. Attending the performance with the Queen were Princess Alia Al Faisal, the wife of the army chief of staff and other officials as well as the wife of the Iraqi ambassador to Jordan.



Six Muhtaseb family members fell martyrs in Amriyeh massacre



Jordanians killed at the Amriyeh shelter, but the Muhtaseb family was the second family reported to have fallen victim in the raid. A Jordanian mother and four daughters were also killed in the same shelter.

"We all like to have peace. But after the killing of civilian children and women at Amriyeh, the people became vengeful towards America and its friends," Fawzi said.

When asked if he had any other children, he said: "None of my children survived, but all the children of Jordan are my children."

Six enlarged coloured mug shots of the mother and five dark-haired children were posted on a map of the Middle East. Fawzi's brother, Nasri Muhtaseb, pointed at each picture and accused the U.S. and its allies of lying.

"What did they do to the U.S.? See for yourself, are these Iraqi soldiers?" Nasri asked the reporters.

He accused the U.S. of coming to the region to destroy Arab civilisation and kill civilians, and not to liberate Kuwait.

"Look what Bush did to civilians. Is this the justice of America and Europe? Why don't they listen to some sense from King Hussein and stop this dirty war against civilians?" Nasri shouted, adding that the Muhtaseb victims were "six out of hundreds of other civilian martyrs."

Member of parliament, Fawzi Tuameh, told reporters that the Muhtasebs "did not come here to gain sympathy, but to show the world what is taking place in Iraq is not an army fighting against another army."

"They are here to show that a slaughter is taking place against a whole people by the most advanced army in this world," said the parliamentarian. "They are fighting the people of Iraq, not the army."

Dr. Tuameh explained that the loss of a Jordanian family was not considered as such, but rather as a national gain because the Muhtasebs felt that they have shared the courage of the people of Iraq.

"If the Americans and their allies think that they can demoralise the Iraqis by targeting the civilians," Dr. Tuameh said, "it will not happen."

Badran stresses abundance by labour regulations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Mudar Badran has issued a new circular to all public and private organisations and government departments underlining the importance of heeding all government instructions and rules concerning the employment of non-Jordanians.

In the circular, the prime minister noted that a letter sent to him by Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi revealed that a number of ministries and government departments as well as public organisations were still employing non-Jordanians in violation of government regulations.

The prime minister said that priority in employment should go to the Jordanian job seekers at various levels and in all fields; and non-Jordanians could only be employed in cases where no Jordanian substitutes were available.

The prime minister's circular followed close on the heels of a statement by the labour minister who noted Tuesday that his ministry had embarked on practical and serious steps designed to substitute non-Jordanian workers with local job seekers in a bid to reduce the problem of unemployment in the Kingdom.

Dughmi said the measures were in implementation of new directives by the government which was seeking to find work for unemployed citizens.

Ministry teams would launch intensive inspection campaigns, said the minister, to ensure that non-Jordanians were being employed in jobs which they had originally been set to do.

He said that strict legal measures would be applied against the violators of the law, and that non-Jordanians not complying with the government's instructions would be given two weeks to leave the country and not allowed to come back.

Economic difficulties hinder comprehensive health scheme

AMMAN (J.T.) — Health Minister Adnan Al Jaljoui blamed the difficult economic and financial situations in Jordan for the delay in the introduction of a general medical scheme covering all citizens in Jordan, but he said that work on the plan was still going on and the Ministry of Health would study all options.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the minister said that such a project was bound to cost the treasury a lot of money which is not available at the moment due to the prevailing economic difficulties the country is passing through.

The Health Ministry has conducted a thorough study of the plan in order to ensure medical treatment for the public and private sectors alike and has defined the positive and negative aspects of all systems.

The ministry would now turn its attention to the question of financing this project and to studying reports by experts in health insurance systems and proposed alternatives so that it can take a final decision, Jaljoui noted.

He said that a draft working plan would be published taking into consideration the various views to be submitted to seminars and special discussions before further steps in this direction could be taken.

The minister also blamed present financial difficulties in Jordan for the delay in carrying out plans designed to boost the work of paramedical services in the Kingdom.

The paramedical services are of paramount importance to hospitals and Jaljoui expressed hope that the financial situation would improve to allow the ministry to boost these services at all levels.

Dr. Jaljoui also told Petra of problems and complications regarding importing medicines from abroad. He said that due to the Gulf crisis, additional insurance and freight charges have been imposed on imports, making it almost impossible to bring in medicines except by air.

Delays in imports were also forcing the ministry in some cases



FIELD CHECK: Health Minister Adnan Jaljoui during his visit to a Zarqa health centre.

to import only the most essential spare parts and very important medicines for emergency cases by air mail. But as long as the harassment of ships heading for Aqaba continues, the ministry will have to rely more and more on locally produced pharmaceutical products which, the minister said, make up at least 40 per cent of the total needs of the country.

In general, the medical situation in the Kingdom is good despite the difficulties; and the Ministry of Health is maintaining close cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO), Jaljoui pointed out.

He said that his recent inspection tour of hospitals and health centres around the country convinced him that the situation was very satisfactory and that sufficient amounts of medicines and medical equipment were available along with staff capable of handling emergency cases in addition to daily duties.

The minister said that special arrangements were under way to coordinate work with the private hospitals in Jordan. He noted that the Health Ministry has drawn up a list of private doctors whose services could be called upon in times of emergency.

Referring to transportation and

communications, the minister noted that in addition to the ambulances available at health centres and hospitals, the ministry has converted 80 private cars into mini ambulances and has made arrangements for the emergency use of ambulances owned by the Civil Defence Department and the Royal Medical Service as well as ambulances operated by charitable and voluntary organisations.

He said that the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health have jointly set up a central operations room serving as a base for all contacts with hospitals and remote health centres around the Kingdom.

Jaljoui said that the Health Ministry was drawing up new agreements for coordination with university hospitals in Irbid and Amman concerning the training of new doctors and the treatment of citizens.

Referring to the main hospital in Amman, Al Bashir Hospital, he said that plans were under way for expansion and new units were being introduced to deal with burns, chest diseases, paediatrics and kidney dialysis among others.

He said that by the end of the year Al Bashir Hospital would have 700 beds, up from 500 at present.

Iraqi official says relief aid is still badly needed

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An appeal to humanitarian relief organisations around the world to come to the aid of the Iraqi civilian population, was issued Thursday by a senior member of the Iraqi Red Crescent.

The alleviation of human suffering among Iraqi civilians, said Ameer Khaled Abdul Hameed, the head of external relations at the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, had been sidelined in favour of Red Cross and Red Crescent aid to countries bordering Iraq.

Although the need to alleviate the human suffering in Iraq "is really very urgent," he said.

Abdul Hameed is a Canadian-educated dentist.

In 1988 and 1989 Iraq imported up to \$2 million worth of medicines a day, according to Abdul Hameed. That figure had not been met in a month since the U.N. trade embargo had been imposed on Iraq last August.

Abdul Hameed said that at present Iraq had only enough medicines to last the population three days.

"We, in the Iraqi Red Crescent, feel frustrated by the very muted response of the humanitarian organisations to the suffering of Iraq's civilian population," Abdul Hameed told a press conference.

"We feel that the international relief organisations have a great task to live up to their humanitarian responsibilities at this stage... because, as I mentioned, it is evident that the targets at present of the allied assaults are civilians," and that the population was not safe, even in bomb shelters.

Both the Jordanian and the

Iranian Red Crescent societies are working in coordination with the Iraqi Red Crescent in order to ensure that humanitarian supplies are delivered to Iraq either through Jordan or Iran.

The Iraqi Red Crescent is negotiating relief services with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as well, said Abdul Hameed.

With nine delegates in Iraq, the ICRC has managed to send 55 tonnes of relief supplies to Iraq via Iran since the war began Jan. 17.

UNICEF, whose regional director visited Iraq last week, has also sent 54 tonnes of medical supplies to Iraq since the war began.

Abdul Hameed said that a lot more aid was needed from the League of Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies (LRCRCS) and other non-governmental organisations if human suffering in Iraq was to be addressed according to its proportion.

Sixty tonnes of medicines and other medical requirements were received through the Munzeria Centre in Iran.

"Anyone who spends time in Baghdad feels that this war that the United States is waging against Iraq is a war against civilians, and that the main aim is to instill a state of terror among civilians and to destroy the infrastructure of Iraq," said Abdul Hameed describing the impression that the bombings of his country left on him.

"We wonder what justification the U.S. and allied forces will give for their destruction of warehouses, electricity generators, the water supply centres and the baby milk factories," he said.

Abdul Hameed, who arrived here Wednesday for a two-day coordination visit, was accompanied

by Dr. Mawlood Bala'wan, head of the Algerian Red Crescent Society and vice president of the LRCRCS. Bala'wan gave a compassionate description of the human suffering that he witnessed in Baghdad during his one-week stay.

In an emotional account Bala'wan said while travelling to Iraq via Iran he had seen that everything related to civilisation and development had been completely annihilated thus destroying the necessary infrastructure for the functioning of daily life in the country.

Bala'wan said that he did not bathe during his one-week stay in Baghdad in order to conserve the little existing water. Water is being rationed and only used for drinking.

Bala'wan said that he had thought about his own children when he saw the black, charred masses that had once been human beings. His hands shaking, Bala'wan said: "I pray that no one sees what I saw in that destroyed bomb shelter in Baghdad... it will give whoever has seen it, sleepless nights."

Bala'wan added that the stench of death was unbearable and that the corpses on each side of the bombed shelter were enough to give anyone nightmares for a lifetime.

Algerian, Sudanese, Mauritanian, Jordanian and Palestinian doctors and nurses have already gone to Baghdad as volunteers through an Amman-based Arab Health Committee representing various medical associations in the Arab World.

A delegation with two representatives of each Arab medical association is expected to go to Baghdad within ten days, said Abdul Hameed.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

King condoles Muhtaseb family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday delegated the Assistant Chief of Protocol at the Royal Court to convey his condolences to the Muhtaseb family over the killing of the wife and five children during last week's air raid on the Amriyeh shelter in Baghdad.

Karaki forms new AYF board

AMMAN (Petra) — Youth and Culture Minister Khalid Al Karaki Friday decided to form a new board of trustees of the Arab Youth Forum (AYF) to run the forum, to prepare for elections and to draw up the forum's statute. The new board includes two members from each of Jordan's eight governorates.

Lower House meets tomorrow

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat has called the House for session Sunday. The House's Foreign Affairs Committee will also hold a meeting under the chairmanship of Ahmad Innab to discuss the political situation in the region. The House's administrative committee will meet Sunday to discuss a number of proposals and complaints referred to it by the House.

Inspection uncovers cheating in gas bottles

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Thursday its teams seized a large number of unsealed gas cylinders stockpiled at one of the gas stores. Following the seizure, the cylinders by team members it was found out that the cylinders were not sealed by the Jordan Petroleum Refinery company and that they were underweight. The owner of the store was arrested and awaits trial.

Oman donates jewellery

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian lady Friday donated her jewellery to support the People's Army and the Iraqi people's

struggle. Farida Ahmad Saleh Al Kayed delivered her jewellery to the head of the People's Committee for Supporting Iraq, in Wadi Seer.

French parliamentarians arrive

AMMAN (Petra) — A French parliamentary delegation Friday arrived in Amman on a short visit to Jordan for talks with Jordanian officials on means of putting an end to the Gulf war and establishing a just and durable peace in the region. The team's visit is part of a tour of the countries of the region.

Khreis meets Iraqi aid official

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary-General of the Arab Doctors Union (ADU), Hassan Khreis, who is also chairman of the Arab Emergency Health Committee, met Friday with the representative of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society in Amman, Dr. Amid Khalid Abdul Rahman, in the presence of President of the Jordanian Doctors Association, Dr. Mamduh Abu Hassan and the Rapporteur of the Arab Emergency Health Committee Dr. Musa Abu Hamid. Khreis and Abdul Rahman discussed ways of coordinating efforts between the Arab Health Committee and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and Iraq's needs of Arab medical teams as well as medical and food supplies.

Yemen loads Jordanian oil tanker today

AMMAN (Petra) — Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Thabet Al Taher Friday received a telephone call from Jordan's ambassador to Yemen informing him that Jordan has officially received the oil tanker which was recently purchased by the government and the Jordan National Shipping Lines Co. The ambassador said the Jordanian flag was hoisted over the tanker. He said loading the ship with 100,000 tonnes of Yemeni crude oil will start Saturday. The tanker is expected to arrive at the Port of Aqaba by the end of February. The government purchased the tanker to make up for the expected shortage of oil resulting from reduced supplies from Iraq following the allied bombing raids on trucks carrying Iraqi oil to Jordan.

DFLP boasts record

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For the first time in twenty years, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) held a public rally in Amman to celebrate its 22nd anniversary.

Addressing the public rally, which was attended by some 20,000 people, were Jordanian and Palestinian figures. Speakers voiced their full support for Iraq in its war against the American-led alliance, and pledged support for the Palestinian uprising to enable it to continue unabated.

The Palestinian ambassador in Amman, Al Tayyeb Abdul Rahman, noted the important role the DFLP has played in leading the Palestinian struggle and in crystallising the provisional national programme for the Palestinian struggle in 1974, which served as a basis for the Palestine Liberation Organisation's programme of struggle drafted in Algiers in 1988.

Abdul Rahman also said that the DFLP has played an active role in enriching Palestinian political thinking and promoting democratic dialogue.

Tunisian team leaves for Iraq Sunday

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Tunisian medical team comprising 23 doctors and nurses plans to leave for Baghdad Sunday carrying three tonnes of medicines and medical equipment for the Iraqi people, according to the vice president of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS), Dr. Mohammad Al Hadid.

Dr. Hadid told the Jordan Times that the group would spend as many days as possible in Iraqi hospitals providing medical treatment to the victims of the allied air raids and people in need

of medical help.

He said that the team, headed by Dr. Abdul Jalil Al Rawash, represented the Tunisian Red Crescent Society.

Arrangements were being made through the JNRCS for the team's departure. The relief and medical supplies the team members are carrying would be channelled through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, Dr. Hadid noted.

He said the team, which arrived in Amman Thursday evening, was coordinating work with the

JNRCS and the Iraqi society.

Meanwhile, the Gulf Peace Team announced that it has sent nearly 15 tonnes of urgently needed medical supplies to the Iraqi Crescent Hospital in Baghdad.

The medical supplies included surgical equipment, anaesthetics, antibiotics, infusion sets and bandages. This was the first international relief convoy to reach the civilian victims of the Gulf war from Jordan, according to a Gulf Peace Team statement issued in Amman.

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No capitulation

IT SEEMS that Washington, specifically the White House, is bent on misinterpreting Baghdad's formal acceptance of the Soviet peace plan for the Gulf crisis.

At a time when Iraq has gone the extra mile to find a peaceful resolution for the Kuwaiti conflict, American and some other Western leaders insist on construing Iraq's positive response to Moscow's peace formula as tantamount to an Iraqi surrender, and are busy articulating the terms of such a capitulation. In fact, some Western officials were caught using the words "Iraqi surrender" right in the wake of Iraq's formal acceptance of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's peace overture. No wonder the allied countries are now demanding outrageous concessions of Iraq of the kind that one normally associates with defeat and surrender.

An example of such untenable conditions is the one that would still hold the Iraqi government as a confirmed perpetrator of war crimes and the continuation of sanctions and embargoes on Iraq even after the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the speed and conditions surrounding the withdrawal itself.

If there is any doubt about Iraq's steadfastness and continued resolve to stand up to the West's intrigues and conspiracies, the speech of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Thursday lays to rest such false hopes. In his speech to the nation on the eve of the formal submission of Iraq's acceptance of Gorbachev's plan, Saddam Hussein made clear that his country is still strong and resilient and capable of crushing any ground war imposed on it by the West.

In the eyes of the sober international community, Iraq has done all that can be asked to advance the prospects for peace in the Gulf. The Soviet peace plan clearly falls short of all Iraq's legitimate demands yet it accepted it as a new landmark in the search for peace in the region. The Soviet Union has committed itself to this latest peace formula and so did other nations including China, Iran, Italy and Holland not to mention the silent majority of the comity of the nations. If U.S. President George Bush and British Prime Minister John Major seek to pursue their scheme in the Gulf theatre in spite of the Soviet initiative, then they would have to reckon with fierce resistance from all those who believe peace should be given a real and sound opportunity.

The next order of business, until late last night was the projected meeting of the U.N. Security Council which had to consider and endorse the Soviet peace plan and define the ways and means for its implementation including the declaration of a ceasefire in the Gulf war.

If Washington and its allies only seek to frustrate the Soviet peace plan by unnecessarily complicating matters or imposing ridiculous conditions on Iraq then the Iraqis would be absolved of all responsibility for the breakdown of the peace process.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Jordanian dailies Friday discussed Iraq's position following Saddam Hussein's nationwide address, and maintained criticism of the U.S. administration and its allies for their negative stand with regard to the peace proposals.

Al Ra'i daily said that the U.S. president's speech reflected the tendency towards peace provided that such peace would cover the whole Middle East area as Iraq had declared from the start. In his address, the Iraqi leader was careful to remind the world of the conspiracy which is being carried out by the United States against Iraq and the rest of the Arab Nation, and which was hatched long before last August; and said that Iraq wants peace but not capitulation, the paper noted. But the paper said that the U.S. administration was quick to disappoint the world community by rejecting the Iraqi bid outright; which means that Washington is intent on pursuing the war with the purpose of causing much suffering for the allied forces as well as the Iraqi people. Saddam Hussein's speech came as a strong reply to the arrogant American position and a defiance for the aggressive nature of the allied mission in the Gulf; and has served as a stern warning that the ground battles could be detrimental for the coalition members, the paper pointed out. The Soviet proposals which were accepted by Iraq, came in line with the international legality and in conformity with the Security Council resolutions but, said the paper, what the Americans are demanding can by no means be acceptable to Baghdad because they are terms for capitulation and would never help to establish genuine peace.

By accepting Moscow's proposals for peace, Iraq has thus achieved a political victory after standing fast in the face of barbaric aggression for the past 36 days, says a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. Khalil Al Sawahiri notes that the U.S. administration was quick to reject the Soviet bid simply because it means the beginning of the end for George Bush and his agents in the Middle East. After a legendary steadfastness and heroic resistance in the face of the bombardments, and following months of economic blockade, the Iraqi people and leadership have proved to be tenacious and intent on holding on to Arab rights and to safeguard Arab honour, says the writer. By accepting the Soviet proposals, the Iraqis have not only achieved military and political victory, but they have also succeeded in aborting the American-Zionist plots in the Middle East and the Gulf, and succeeded in rallying support from the Islamic nations for the Arab just cause, says the writer. By reacting favourably to the Soviet bid for peace, Iraq has now turned the tables on the enemy and opened the way for splits among the alliance, he adds. The writer supports Baghdad's response to the bids for peace, and expresses the views that with such reply, Baghdad is causing the so-called American new world order to be doomed.

View From Amman

IT IS not only President George Bush of the United States of America who is interested in the future. Our concern is not that he is concerned with his future; rather it is because he is concerned, it seems, with our future. And, however we may be dismayed with this new pass-time that he is developing, in addition to jogging, fishing and golfing, it does not seem likely that we can dissuade him from his aim.

Unlike most other humans, even some world leaders, Mr. Bush is not consulting with palm readers, coffee or tea cup diviners, or even with the more sophisticated tarot cards explainers, but with statistics fed into a computer, and attitudes shaped by a well-placed remark or advice made here or there. His soothsayers are not gypsies in a carnival tent but cool-blooded, single-minded specialists and experts closeted in the underground bunkers of institutions like the Pentagon, the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency. It is their business to "make" the future for others, or, at least highly influence its course. In their executive summaries, details and plans, there is no warm smile or knowing wink designed to make one more comfortable.

We may indulge ourselves in blaming Mr. Bush, or Shamir — maybe we should amalgamate the two together, since they seem to have developed an organic relationship between them and call them shortly "Bushamir" — for their uninvited concern with our future, but the blame must really rest with us. What have we done for ourselves? The crisis is now at its zenith, and Iraq, still alone on the battlefield is fighting the Arab fight though the vast majority of the Arabs are on the other side. And once again, we prove to ourselves as to the rest of the world that our biggest enemy is still within ourselves.

Judging from our performance in modern times, the future looks like more of our past. We seem, once again, not to have learned anything from the lessons that life, Bush-Shamir or others have been trying to teach us. One would think that somewhere,

something would have changed or at least would promise to. Yet as we stare deeper into the bowels of the present crisis, we see only a continuation of the same. Arab leaders still talking at their peoples rather than consulting with them and the sum total of most of their activities has been in the spirit of distraction rather than action. And so it has again come to pass that an historic opportunity is missed.

Whatever the sins of Iraq may have been, no one else is innocent. Surely, Iraq should not have occupied Kuwait, but just as surely, those who are now mere on-lookers or those ganging up to take a stab to complete the kill are just as guilty. For while the world is holding its breath anticipating the grand finale, one would expect that we would be consulting among ourselves about the days to come.

If it is a sin to drop a rock into a cesspool to stir up the rotteness that exists there, then Iraq is a sinner and anyone who can may cast a stone. The tragic fact is that we have nothing to lose but our shackles and Iraq somehow, no one knows how, realised the fact and dropped the rock.

And now, while most of us are sitting in these dark and odd days wringing our hands, not only is no one thinking of the days to come but we seem to enjoy an orgy of self-flagellation by criticising and even attacking Iraq. The truth of the matter is that the West achieved all its strategic aims on or even before Aug. 2, 1990 when this present crisis ostensibly began. By that date, the oil was already secure in Western hands, Saudi Arabia protected, and an Iraqi commitment to withdraw from Kuwait secured. Nevertheless, the crisis escalated so as to ensure the future for Shamir by sealing the future of Iraq. One would think that everyone, at least among the Arabs, knew that and would act accordingly. While some are intimidated, others dragged by the herd mentality developed by the West, others bought, none could

act, as if the whole Arab body politic is totally drugged. The Seven Sleepers awoke, and as the story goes they remained awake thereafter. Since the advent of modern times we seem to awaken for brief moments and then are induced to slumber once again and thus our life has come to be a series of missed opportunities and broken hearts. At this rate we may never know who is doing what to us. What they are doing and our existence will remain as tangential in the future as it has been in the past, being moved like pawns at the will of others.

Is it true that only a few of us realise that this is an historic bend in the road? If that is the case, then we should blame no one but ourselves for God knows we have had enough experience and that "Bushamir" taught us enough lessons and created for us enough facts. When will we ever learn?

In looking over the future designed for us throughout this century, I am struck by the fact that it was an American president, Woodrow Wilson who sponsored the idea of the League of Nations while the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot agreement were revealed; that it was an American president, Franklin Roosevelt who sponsored the United Nations while the partition of Palestine was advanced; and that it is an American president, George Bush is sponsoring the so-called new world order while the slaughter of the Arabs, through the slaughter of Iraq is being carried out.

It is we, not the United Nations who are in perfect ill health. We cannot go on forever so mindlessly vulnerable, nor can we go on forever so out of step with the requirements of our time. Cruel as the adjustments must be, they must be made. In the Holy Koran it is said that God does not change a people unless they change first within themselves. Either we change or we perish as others are planning for us. Can this choking silence maintained by our political systems be maintained.

Joysticks, Manhood and George Bush's Horse

By Rami G. Khouri

THE intensity and scope of the American-led bombing campaign in Iraq, combined with Washington's negative initial responses in the past week to Iraqi and Soviet proposals to end the war on the basis of U.N. resolutions, have triggered deep misgivings throughout the world about Washington's conduct and true aims in the Gulf war, and about its future role in the area. While Americans are enjoying the video films of laser-guided bombs and the deceptive emotional highs of their first ever joystick war, most of the rest of the world is asking very specific questions: — what does the civilian casualty toll and destruction of non-military targets in Iraq speak of American political morality? — is the military conduct of the war a prelude to American political behaviour in the Middle East and around the world in decades to come? — does Washington really seek the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, as stipulated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 660; or does it seek the military and political bludgeoning of Iraq, a Third World country whose challenge to the British-American imperial order of the 20th Century had to be put down with such brutality that no other country from the South would even contemplate such a challenge for many decades?

The brutality of the war and the horror of civilian deaths was most dramatically captured in the television images of the burnt, charred and still smoldering bodies of over 300 women and children killed in the American missile attack February 13 on the Baghdad shelter. In Arab eyes, as gruesome as the human toll itself was the American government's attempt to blame

the Iraqis for placing civilians in what had been used as a civilian shelter for many years during the Iran-Iraq war. Iraqi officials this week said their country has suffered 20,000 dead and 60,000 injured, of whom up to 7,000 may be civilian casualties, alongside economic damage of some \$200 billion. The wholesale destruction of the civil infrastructure of Iraq, including power stations, roads, refineries, industrial plants, bridges, water systems, homes, religious sites and other non-military facilities has brought hardship and potential health hazards to virtually the entire population of 17 million people. Everywhere, but most critically in big cities, people live without electricity, clean water, sewerage systems, emergency medical supplies, heating oil and gasoline and other essential goods and services. Cholera and typhoid epidemics are a major immediate hazard.

All of this seems largely hidden from the American conscience. In the world of those who fight a joystick war, there is no room for real people, no reality to burning human flesh, no validity to Third World emotions, and no appreciation of the political or moral consequences of one's actions half way around the world. In a flag-waving America dazzled by the glare of its yellow ribbons, it seems the mind has no room for the possibility that 90,000 air sorties and 100,000 tons of bombs dropped on Iraq in five weeks can disrupt the lives of ordinary people. In the mind of America, the bombs are smart; the war is moral; the president is at peace with himself. Laser-guided bombs do not make mistakes. There is no room for human error. There is only the triumph of technol-

ogy over humanity, of militarism over conscience. Zap the Iraqis!

Much of the rest of the world, however, is horrified by the political triumph of an American militaristic frenzy which threatens to drive U.S. global aims and behaviour for many decades to come. Consequently, the past week has seen significant political reactions from such key parties as non-Arab but Islamic Iran, leading Third World countries such as India, and powers such as the Soviet Union, China and Italy. Their message is the same: Iraq's readiness to withdraw from Kuwait should bring this war to an end, and the United States should not stall in order to destroy Iraq completely and use this conflict as a pretext to maintain exaggerated influence or hegemony in the Middle East.

These and many other countries feel the United States' bombing campaign has gone far beyond the U.N. resolutions' aim of liberating Kuwait, that the liberation of Kuwait can be achieved by responding to the Iraqi and Soviet initiatives, and that Washington may be using the moral cover of the U.N. to destroy Iraq and leave a permanent American political stamp on the affairs of the Middle East.

For Americans who can see beyond the sights of their Stealth bombers and feel beyond the fingertips of their joysticks, this should be a moment of national reckoning. What happens in the ground war, if there is a ground war, seems almost irrelevant now, given the indiscriminate ferocity of the American-led political, economic and military campaign against Iraq since the first week of August. Washington's broader motives for this conflict — the intoxication of

influence and power, the glitter of gold, the spoils of empire — appear more clear to the Arab, Islamic and Third World today than they did when George Bush first sent American troops "to defend Saudi Arabia" in the first week of August. Put simply, this is a war by which the American-led cash register coalition wishes to preserve the neo-imperial order which Great Britain and France instituted in the Middle East three-quarters of a century ago.

Most Arabs, Muslims and Third World nationals are deeply frightened by the prospect of a Pax Americana in the Middle East, with the United States' military and economic power dominating or even dictating future strategic and commercial patterns in the region. Like the Pax Romana of the early years of the 1st Millennium AD when all our roads led to Rome, a late 2nd Millennium AD Pax Americana would see Middle Eastern people and resources only in terms of their economic and strategic usefulness or servitude to the neo-imperial heartland of America. Several Arab and Third World states have already indicated their willingness to dance to the tune of servitude to America — if the price is right, and if the cash register drawer remains open.

Even worse is the spectre of a Pax Texicana, which would see Texan oilmen such as George Bush and James Baker riding their Cruise missiles around the world like a fast-shooting cowboy riding his horse around his cattle ranch, calmly shooting intruders and other swarthy looking folks. According to the morality and rules of conduct of a Pax Texicana, America would have the right to protect what it defines as its strategic in-

terests anywhere in the world using whatever military, economic or diplomatic force it deemed fit. In other words, instead of a new world order, we would have a return to the Wild West and the destruction of the American Indian nations by the white cowboy/railroad industrialists combine — a moral and temporal regression to an era when technologically advanced people calmly and systematically destroyed entire nations populated by people with darker skins and different religions, in order to assuage the injured honour or cowboy manhood of its leaders, an era ruled by the logic of hormones and macho manhood, rather than law and morality.

The Iraqi statement of February 15 and the subsequent Soviet peace initiative provide a means to get Iraq out of Kuwait — which Iraq said it was prepared to do in early August. But the negative American response to both initiatives suggests that Washington's war aims transcend the mere liberation of Kuwait. Washington seems bent on destroying Iraq's military and civilian infrastructure, humiliating and degrading its people, and driving its leadership out of power. We ask: does the United States want Iraq out of Kuwait, as resolution 660 demands, or does George Bush need to prove his manhood by destroying Iraq and trying to humiliate its people? If this reflects the political morality of the "feel good/be happy/kinder/gentler" America that offers itself as the moral pivot of a new world order, it also marks the start of the shift from the present military conflict in the Gulf to the wider global political confrontation that will define the post-war period.

This global confrontation

pits, on one side, the United States, Great Britain, Israel and assorted bangers-on and aspiring colonialists against, on the other side, an emerging international counter-coalition of states such as the Soviet Union, China, Iran, India and almost all Arab, Islamic and Third World countries. The counter-coalition cringed last week at the sight of the char-coaled bodies of Iraqi women and children killed in the Baghdad shelter, and cringes again this week at the dismissive American reaction to Iraqi and Soviet offers to implement resolution 660 and secure an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The battle for Kuwait is and has always been a fake; because we always knew and said that Iraq single-handedly could not stand up to the military forces arrayed against it. But the military battle is not what this conflict is all about. The battle for the new world order is real, and it has just begun. Like Vietnam, this shift from militarism to political struggle is marked by overwhelming American supremacy in weapons technology, but overwhelming American ignorance and naivete about the political and mental landscape of the Third World. The video game is almost over: The real political and human battle is now almost engaged.

When military technology ruled the day and the airwaves, the support which Iraq enjoyed throughout the Arab, Muslim and Third Worlds could not be activated in a meaningful manner. Now that the political battle looms, we will see the tremendous anti-American and anti-British emotional and political forces unleashed throughout the region brought into play. It is at this point, when people stop using their guns and start using their heads — like in Vietnam — that America gets its ass kicked.

Quick victory for allies would defy Murphy's law

By Robert Burns
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A lot would have to go right, incredibly right, for U.S. and allied forces to achieve quick victory in a ground offensive against Iraq, military analysts say.

Army planners like to say that in preparing for any battle they keep uppermost in their minds the proposition that anything that can go wrong, likely will. They say they plan for a worst-case scenario to minimize ugly surprises.

On the harsh terrain and fortified beaches that would be the battlefield for allied and Iraqi land forces, plenty could go wrong. But if the allied armies are as prepared as they say, and Iraq's forces are as heavily damaged as the Pentagon claims, the expected glitches might be only minor setbacks.

"If you break his command and control structure, and if he gets confused and can't respond, I can see us rolling the thing up faster than I would have thought possible even a month ago," said Jack

Merritt, a retired army colonel and president of the Association of the U.S. Army.

Merritt is habitually cautious in assessing the prospects for an allied victory against Iraq.

"It just might be that we're that much better," than the Iraqi forces, Merritt said in an interview Tuesday.

The best-case scenario from the allied soldiers' viewpoint would have Iraq starting a withdrawal from Kuwait before the ground campaign begins. But if the ground fighting starts in earnest, the best the allied forces probably could hope for would be an Iraqi capitulation within a couple of weeks.

Here are some of the things that would have to go right to achieve that quick victory:

— The allied forces gain the benefit of "tactical surprise" against Iraq by deceiving Iraqi commanders and intelligence units about the main point of attack. In U.S. army war-fighting doctrine, this is an essential element.

— U.S. armoured and air assault units make full use of their

extensive training in fighting under the cover of darkness. The army claims its night-vision goggles and thermal-imaging sights for M1-A1 tanks and Bradley infantry fighting vehicles give it a night-fighting capability that the Iraqis can't match. The Iraqis have shown, however, that they can manoeuvre at night.

— Allied communications hold up. It's an accepted fact that communications links between commanders and their troops are one of the most vulnerable aspects of war. Communications breakdowns can lead to confusion, disorder and defeat, but if U.S. links are as strong as the Pentagon says they are, this could be a key to victory.

— A marine corps amphibious landing on Kuwait's beaches, which appears to be part of the allied battle plan, is executed without large losses from undetected Iraqi anti-ship mines or slowed by high seas or some unforeseen oil slick.

— The weather cooperates. Debilitating sandstorms can hit suddenly.

— Allied airplanes are as successful in avoiding anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles as they have reportedly been during the first five weeks of the war.

— Iraq's forces are disorganized and disoriented — as many U.S. military officials believe they are — to the point that they cannot withstand the initial ground assault. The key issue here probably is whether the allied aerial bombardments have taken a sufficiently heavy toll on the Republican Guard, which is the best-trained and -equipped part of the Iraqi defences.

In recent days, some U.S. military officials have begun suggesting that enough of these factors seem within the allies' grasp to ensure a quick entry into Kuwait.

"They will be defeated in short order if we initiate a ground campaign," Lt.-Gen. Thomas Kelly, director of operations for the joint chiefs of staff, said Tuesday.

Kelly didn't say what moved him to abandon the more cautious line that senior U.S. defence officials had followed since the start of the war.

War could cost \$77 billion this year

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government believes the Gulf war will cost \$58 billion to \$77 billion this fiscal year, according to Defense Department documents.

To pay for the conflict, the White House was to announce Friday that it intends to ask Congress for \$15 billion, plus the use of all \$51 billion in aid pledged so far by the United States' allies, said the documents obtained Thursday by the Associated Press.

According to the documents, the costs of Operation Desert Storm — the combat phase of the confrontation with Iraq — will total \$25 billion to \$44 billion through March 31. The exact cost will depend on the type of combat that is involved, the documents said.

The government had not estimated publicly the costs of combat, other than to say they were running in the hundreds of millions of dollars each day.

The lack of information has angered members of Congress, where the House of Representatives passed legislation Thursday requiring monthly reports on war costs.

The only other cost information provided had been to say that the costs of deploying U.S. troops to the Gulf had totalled \$11.1 billion from August through Dec. 31. Other countries have pledged nearly \$10 billion in aid for that period.

Officials said last week that President George Bush would ask for \$56 billion to pay for the costs of the conflict for fiscal 1991, which began Oct. 1. They said that \$11 billion would come from promised foreign assistance and \$15 billion would come from U.S. taxpayers.

The documents obtained Thursday include a letter from Defence Secretary Dick Cheney to White House Budget Director Richard Darman, dated Feb. 12, saying his request "should finance costs through the foreseeable future."

The papers also include a Defence Department estimate that the costs of keeping the 500,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf from October through March would be \$21 billion. This includes extra salaries, transportation, fuel and other costs.

King

(Continued from page 1)

of the five that that be hoped their government would react positively and in good faith to the Soviet peace bid.

U.S. President George Bush said Friday his country appreciated the Soviet initiative, but gave Iraq an ultimatum to start pulling its troops out of Kuwait by Saturday noon.

The King told the ambassadors of the five that Security Council members that the details of the peace plan unveiled in Moscow Friday fulfilled the goals of all those involved in the Gulf crisis.

King Hussein paid tribute to the efforts of the Soviet Union, Iran and Iraq to avert the region from catastrophe and devastation.

"Too many wounds have been opened. This is the time to begin to heal them. Too many human losses have occurred. This is the time to put an end to these losses and this is the time to live with hope and a better future," the King said in his airport statement.

"This is the time for statesmanship, for leaders to consider the interests of their people involved in this conflict, and people throughout the world," he added.

"I believe the achievement is a great one, and I'd like to say how much the efforts of all who contributed to this achievement," the King said.

Asked to comment on the absence of a linkage between the Gulf conflict and the Palestine cause the King said:

"I believe the Palestinian problem is a problem that should be addressed on its own merits. It should have been addressed on its own merits."

Asked at the airport about Mr. Bush's response to the initiative the King said that he believed that the goals of Resolution 660 were on their way to be implemented and hoped that all parties to the conflict would look at the plan through this perspective.

King Hussein told Arab ambassadors he hoped a new era would be ushered and all wounds be healed referring to the divide that befell the Arab World after Aug.

Bashir

(Continued from page 1)

moment of his personal and temporary interests.

"On the contrary, Jordan's major concern was to address Arab and Muslim issues. Jordan's honourable stand has made it incumbent on us in Sudan to respect it and it gives me great pleasure to meet with the King and learn from his opinion and directives."

The Jordanian position and that of the other Arab countries advocating an inter-Arab solution was the right position, the general said.

Gen. Bashir called on "all honourable Arabs" to stand by Iraq and to extend "every possible support to it should the allied forces decide to escalate their aggression against Iraq because all of us know that the aim of the conspiracy is to destroy Iraq's capacities and might."

Asked about his evaluation of the situation now, following Iraq's acceptance of the Soviet peace plan, Gen. Bashir said after Iraq's acceptance of the Soviet plan "there are no justifications for continuing the war."

"If the aim of the aggression is to drive Iraq out of Kuwait, then this aim is no longer valid, and therefore the war should be discontinued," he said.

"However, we know that the aim is not to liberate Kuwait or to force the Iraqi army out of it, but to destroy Iraq," he added.

PLO

(Continued from page 1)

problem was always a political one and was never an issue of timetables "as far as we are concerned," Mr. Abu Sbarif said.

The Iraqi acceptance was seen by the PLO as an "opportunity to settle the Gulf crisis politically and save the region from catastrophic results," he said.

At a press conference held here last week, stronger terms were used by Mr. Arafat to describe how he viewed "connection." "Tell the allies that if they want to have O-I-L, they have to also take P-I-L-O," he said in describing that statement as the essence of "the Saddam initiative."

In late December, Palestinian sources said that it was left up to the PLO to decide when they felt enough political ground was covered on the Palestine issue so that linkage, as a formal condition, could be dropped by Iraq as a prerequisite for withdrawing from Kuwait.

Although Arab diplomats at the time could not explain the delay in an expected statement from the PLO to the effect that linkage was already forged, it was later said that the PLO leaders did not make that statement after Iraq told them that war was going to be forced on Baghdad even if the linkage issue was dropped.

A diplomatic source in Moscow told the Jordan Times over the weekend that two senior PLO officials were in the Soviet capital at the same time as the Iraqi foreign minister to "convince Iraq to accept the initiative."

According to the diplomat, who requested anonymity, Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas, two senior PLO officials, were pressing the visiting Iraqi delegation, headed by Tariq Aziz, to accept the Soviet plan even though it contained no reference to the Palestinian problem.

Mr. Abu Sbarif, in his interview from Tunis, indicated that the Palestine issue was still on the bargaining table between Iraq and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other. "Everyone will be waiting for the Security Council to seriously address the Palestinian problem as soon as the crisis ends," he said. He made direct reference to pledges by U.S. President George Bush to address the Palestine issue as soon as the Gulf crisis ended. "Bush himself made the connection," Abu Sbarif pointed out.

Mood

(Continued from page 1)

Baghdad anyway? Why are they shelling civilians? Why do they not fight at the battle front?" asks Taleb Abbas, who lost nine family members in the bombing.

The Iraqi leadership seems to be aware of the mood. Over the past 72 hours, the state-run media have tried to prepare the public for major sacrifices. Commentaries in newspapers and on radio are aimed at readying the population for the toughest round of the battle yet: The ground assault.

"We are approaching the mother of all battles," said an editorial in Al Thawra newspaper Tuesday.

The editorials also aimed at

boosting morale. "A strong Iraq is awaiting them (the coalition forces) in the battlefield," said yesterday's Al Jumhuriya daily.

People on the street say they are ready for the ground war, which they believe offers a chance to fight their enemies face to face. At the same time, they concede that the continual aerial bombardment is disrupting lives, and they worry about its effect on their children.

"My three-year-old boy clutches me in panic when the raids start. I am concerned about him. Our children are very disturbed and cannot sleep," says Saad, an Iraqi engineer.

Some Iraqis argue that the leadership is in a good position to take a conciliatory stand now that it has proved Iraqi forces can hold out and not be crushed in a few days, as some Western military experts had predicted. But they say it is unlikely Iraq will accept a humiliating peace.

Details of the Soviet proposal were not available here. But Iraqis have heard unconfirmed reports on Radio Monte Carlo that the proposal involves an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, followed by a pullout of coalition forces from the Gulf region.

The proposal also purportedly guarantees Iraq's security, territorial sovereignty, and economic and security interests in the region.

Arab analysts here say such an outline would be acceptable to the Iraqi government, especially if the Soviets succeed in establishing linkage, at least in principle, between the Gulf crisis and other regional conflicts, particularly the Palestinian problem.

The question being raised here, however, is whether such a proposal would be acceptable to the United States.

Iraqis have been encouraged by positive responses to the Soviet proposal from some European governments. But Iraq is no longer ready to place hopes on breaking the U.S.-led alliance against it, informed sources say.

A well-connected Iraqi source says Baghdad will try to be flexible for two reasons:

— To prove to its people that it has given peace a chance when asking them to make big sacrifices.

— To give the Soviet Union and Iran, which have emerged as the principle mediators and guarantors, a formula to pressure the U.S. to accept a negotiated solution.

Baghdad is cautious not to appear to be the party torpedoing peace efforts, says an Arab diplomat. The leadership is now giving priority to consolidating its home front rather than to political manoeuvres on the international front, he says.

"The leadership has learned that its best bet is to keep its people prepared and not depend heavily on either Arab support or dramatic shifts in the position of European countries and the international community," says a Baathist Party official.

The story also ran in the Christian Science Monitor.

Libya

(Continued from page 1)

other Arab countries if the problem was non-acceptance of their travel papers," he

added. "They also said only humanitarian considerations and no politics were behind the offer."

International relief officials said repatriation agencies were willing to arrange passage for those seeking shelter in Libya. "It is a human tragedy and we are indeed here to help them," said the chief of mission of an international agency in Amman who also preferred anonymity.

The problem of Gazans stranded in Kuwait developed after Egypt, whose laissez-passez most of them hold, said that it would not recognise the documents, according to officials.

But a senior Egyptian diplomat maintained that Cairo had not imposed a blanket ban on Gazans using its territory to enter the occupied Gaza Strip.

"We are asking for individual applications from all those who want to travel to Gaza, and permissions are granted by the Ministry of Interior on a case-by-case," said the diplomat, preferring anonymity.

However, Jordanian officials and international relief officials said there have been very few cases where Egypt had granted such permission. The Egyptian position is seen as an expression of anger in response to the support that the PLO and the Palestinian community in general have extended to Iraq in the Gulf crisis, where Cairo leads the Arab camp in the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition.

As a result, as many as 65,000 Gazans, many of whom possess documents dating back to 1967 when Israel occupied the strip, and some others who have the right of residence in Egypt, are believed to remain in Kuwait since authorities demand that all Palestinian residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip can return only through the same exit they used to depart: In the case of many Gazans, the Al Aareh crossing in the Sinai.

Those who used the bridges across the River Jordan to leave the occupied territories are allowed to return by the same route.

Since July 1988, when it severed legal and administrative links with the West Bank, Jordan has been issuing two-year temporary passports to Gazans — in addition to permanent residents of the West Bank — to facilitate their travel and work outside the occupied territories. These passports do not entitle the holders to Jordanian citizenship; nor do they oblige the holders to serve in the armed forces or pay taxes.

"We would like to help those stranded people, but we do not want a situation where they get stuck in Jordan with nowhere to go," said a senior official commenting on the Gazans in Kuwait.

"We have no problems with Palestinians holding Syrian or Lebanese documents but it is indeed a problem with those who possess Egyptian documents," he told the Jordan Times, while confirming that many Gazans were turned back from the Al Ruweished border post with Iraq since the Gulf crisis erupted in August and a higher number since the war erupted last month.

The Jordanian position is interpreted by analysts and Western diplomats as a reflection

of several factors, including fears that tens of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza could get stranded in Jordan without any international or Arab guarantee that they could go home, that a precedent could be set which would be exploited by Israeli leaders who still nurse the "Jordan is Palestine" theory, that other Gulf states could move to expel Palestinians to the Kingdom, and that the influx of any massive number of Palestinians would only contribute to further exacerbate the Kingdom's fragile economy.

"While we do recognise the humanitarian aspect of the problem and have every sympathy for the stranded, we also believe that the international community has to share in the responsibility," said the official.

Soviets

(Continued from page 1)

thanked the Soviets for their first peace plan but said it had too many conditions.

The U.S. demand calls for Iraq's withdrawal to be completed in one week, and for the release of all prisoners of war to be released within 48 hours.

The Soviet plan did not mention several provisions of the U.S. plan, such as a removal of booby traps and mines, and a cessation of combat flights over Kuwait except to transport withdrawing forces.

Mr. Aziz and his Soviet counterpart, Alexander Bessmertnykh, met for 2½ hours at a government guest house in downtown Moscow, and Mr. Aziz was to meet President Gorbachev Saturday morning.

Mr. Ignatenko had told a news conference before the Aziz-Bessmertnykh meeting that the Iraqis had accepted an eight-point peace plan Mr. Gorbachev proposed at a midnight meeting. The new plan has already been

sent to Baghdad for approval, the spokesman said.

Mr. Ignatenko said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein got the plan through Soviet communication channels at 1500 GMT.

"The Soviet leadership expects a reply any minute," Mr. Ignatenko told reporters.

Adding to the confusion over just what had been agreed was a warning from Gorbachev personal envoy Yevgeny Primakov to the U.S. not to reject the plan, which he called a major success in the eyes of the world.

"It is really taking shape and if at this moment it is broken down by war then the responsibility will lie with those who start the war," he said in a television interview.

President Gorbachev meanwhile contacted the member nations to the U.N. Security Council to discuss the new peace proposal.

Bush

(Continued from page 1)

yesterday represents a serious and useful effort which is appreciated. But major obstacles remain," Mr. Fitzwater said.

He spoke before the announcement in Moscow that Iraq had agreed — as part of what is now a six-point plan — to an immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait as soon as there is a full ceasefire in the Gulf war.

Soviet presidential spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko told a news briefing the agreement had been reached following intensive discussions between Mr. Gorbachev and other Soviet officials with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz.

Mr. Fitzwater said Mr. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker had discussed the Soviet peace effort with Mr. Gorbachev in a 75-minute phone conversation Friday.

"I think it's clear from the length of their discussion that they had a very good conversation," Mr. Fitzwater said when

Following is the revised Soviet plan:

- Iraq would implement U.N. Resolution 660, calling for an immediate withdrawal from Kuwait, without delay and without conditions.
- The withdrawal would begin a day after a ceasefire.
- The withdrawal would be completed 21 days after the ceasefire.
- After withdrawal, all other Security Council resolutions will "lose their meaning and be rescinded."
- Prisoners of war would be released within 72 hours after the ceasefire begins.
- Supervision of the withdrawal would be conducted by a peacekeeping force determined by the Security Council.
- Following is a set of conditions set earlier by the U.S.
 1. Iraq must begin large-scale withdrawal from Kuwait by noon EST (1700 GMT), Saturday, Feb. 23.
 2. Iraq must complete military withdrawal in one week.
 3. Within the first 48 hours of withdrawal, Iraq must remove all its forces from Kuwait City and allow for the prompt return of the "legitimate" government of Kuwait.
 4. Iraq must withdraw from all prepared defences along the Saudi-Kuwaiti and Saudi-Iraq borders, from Bubiyan and Warbah islands, and from the Rumaila oil field.
 5. Within the one week specified, Iraq must return all its forces to their positions of Aug. 1 in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 660.
 6. In cooperation with the International Red Cross, Iraq must release all prisoners of war and "third-country civilians" and return the remains of dead servicemen. This action must begin immediately with the start of the withdrawal and be completed in 48 hours.
 7. Iraq must remove all explosives or booby traps, including those on Kuwaiti oil installations, and designate Iraqi military liaison officers to work with Kuwaiti and other coalition forces on the withdrawal's operational details.
 8. Iraq must cease combat air fire, aircraft flights over Iraq and Kuwait, except for transport aircraft carrying troops out of Kuwait, and allow coalition aircraft exclusive control over and use of all Kuwaiti air space.
 9. Iraq must cease all destructive actions against Kuwaiti citizens and property, and release all Kuwaiti detainees.
 10. The United States and its coalition partners will not attack retreating Iraqi forces, and will exercise restraint so long as withdrawal proceeds in accordance with the above guidelines and there are no attacks on other countries.
 11. Any breach of these terms will bring an "instant and sharp response" from coalition forces.

asked if the Soviets still supported the anti-Iraq coalition.

In his statement, Mr. Bush said the Soviet proposal on its face seemed more reasonable than a "defiant, uncompromising address" by President Saddam Hussein on Baghdad Radio Thursday, when he said Iraq would fight on in "the mother of all battles."

But Mr. Bush, who also spoke before the latest announcement from Moscow, said the Soviet plan promised unconditional Iraqi withdrawal "only to set forth a number of conditions."

Mr. Fitzwater said one unacceptable condition in the Soviet plan, the lifting of U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq when two-thirds of its forces were out of Kuwait, would let Iraq use oil revenue to rebuild its army.

Mr. Bush said the urgency of forcing Iraq to quit Kuwait was underscored by a new "scorched earth policy."

"We learned this morning that Saddam has now launched a scorched-earth policy against Kuwait, anticipating perhaps he will now be forced to leave. He is wantonly setting fire to and destroying the oil wells, the oil tanks, the export terminals and other installations of that small country."

"Indeed, they are destroying the entire oil production system of Kuwait."

Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said later the Iraqis had set fire to more than 150 wells and that a huge black cloud was

drifting over the area.

British Prime Minister John Major said the U.S. ultimatum to Iraq was negotiable.

"We are not prepared to be strung along," he told reporters. Allied nations responded with caution and some hope to the Soviet-Iraqi peace plan earlier Friday, but almost no one appeared in embrace or reject it outright.

Italian Premier Giulio Andreotti was more hopeful, saying Iraq's acceptance of the Soviet initiative Thursday had "rekindled hopes" that an end to the war was near without the need for a ground offensive by the allies.

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Iraq's agreement to the peace plan "represents a step in the right direction and gives reason to hope for a peaceful solution of the Gulf crisis."

The statement released in Paris, however, did note that several key points remained vague.

An Arab diplomat in Riyadh said he did not expect any official statements from the Saudi government because Mr. Bush spoke in the name of the coalition and after consultations among the allies.

"Bush's reply was in the framework of the coalition, and the stand is a unified one for the allies who are accepting nothing less of unconditional implementation of resolutions of the international community," he said.

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Economy

Gulf war keeps Jordan's economic planning hazy

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian economy is on an open-ended transition phase under crisis management and any definite course for the Kingdom's troubled economy depends on how and when the war in the Gulf ends.

Officials and planners say that short-term decisions aimed at sustaining the economy without allowing for further deterioration characterise the status of the Kingdom's finances, plunged into chaos by the Gulf crisis and steered for the moment by international assistance.

"We are unable to draw up any long-term plans, whether in terms of foreign debt servicing or streamlining our imports," said a senior official. "Everything that happens on our east (Iraq) and west (the Israeli-occupied territories and Israel proper) has a direct bearing on our economy," he pointed out.

While the immediate effect of the Gulf war, which began Jan. 17, is still to be felt outside the area of fuel consumption and driving habits, officials foresee further belt-tightening measures as and when they have to draw from the foreign exchange reserves of the cash-strapped Kingdom.

But what Jordan escaped was a serious blow to the value of the Jordanian dinar. Many analysts point out that the war did not have a direct impact on the economy — except a decline in Iraqi oil supply as a result of damages done to Iraqi oil-producing facilities and attacks on Jordan-bound oil tankers — and that the negative effects of the Gulf crisis had already taken their toll on the financial and monetary status of the Kingdom before the war began.

The decline in Iraqi oil supply, however, has had an immediate impact on the economy since Jordan was not paying cash for the imports, but accounted it as repayment of Iraqi debts to the Kingdom.

Jordan was forced to turn to Syria and Yemen for its oil needs at international prices, and this is expected to bring an additional

burden of \$25 million to \$30 million every month on the treasury, officials said.

A part of the damages done to Jordanian exports was addressed by an agreement to sell phosphates to Iran worth \$66 million this year. Additional outlets for Jordanian exports are expected to be opened further with the reopening of the Jordanian and Iranian diplomatic missions in Tehran and Amman and exchange of visits by businessmen.

With the receipt of international assistance and pledges of about \$1.15 billion in the form of long-term loans and outright grants, the foreign exchange reserves at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) remains at a relatively healthy level of around \$750 million (in fact, it is for the first time in four years that the Kingdom's reserves have registered more than \$650 million).

In addition, gold reserves and receivables account for another \$500 million.

Deposits and savings of individuals with commercial banks are estimated at about \$2.5 billion, about half of it in foreign currency. There has been no clear accounting of external accounts maintained by Jordanians, but analysts say it could run into several billion dollars.

The CBJ has said it has no intention whatsoever to move against external accounts held by Jordanians who are residents in the Kingdom.

While officials and economists are optimistic that Jordan would be able to maintain delicate economic rope-trick in the short-term, doubts are cast on that confidence by the realisation that the Kingdom would face grave difficulties when it resumes its suspended servicing of foreign debts and imports go up as a result of declining tension in a post-Gulf-war situation.

Jordan adopted a selective approach to servicing its foreign debts of \$8.3 billion shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August since it was clear that the Kingdom's carefully measured economic moves were totally scrambled with the crisis. Tens of thousands of Jord-

nians have returned home, adding to the already high unemployment rate and imposing new demands on the water, power, housing and related infrastructure of the Kingdom.

Studies made by the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) indicate that the total loss Jordan and Jordanians suffered as a result of the Gulf crisis amounted to \$8.4 billion — in terms of savings and assets of Jordanian expatriates living in Kuwait and the direct losses to the national economy.

Ironically, as some economists point out, lies in the sharp decline in imports as a result of uncertainties over the Gulf situation and problems posed by the de facto blockade at Aqaba port.

However, in a post-war situation the consumption-oriented Jordanian society will make a heavy demand on the economy by boosting imports, economists say.

Finance Minister Basel Jaraneh said last week that the Kingdom's losses — trade with Iraq and Kuwait, Arab financial assistance, Gulf expatriate remittances and transit and port revenues on Iraq-bound cargo imported through Aqaba — were around \$2 billion and the figure could rise to \$4 billion in 1991.

The international assistance that Jordan has received came in line with a Jordanian request for aid as provided for in Article 50 of the United Nations charter which calls for pecuniary compensation for countries economically hit by their adherence to mandatory resolutions of the Security Council.

But once it moves to service its foreign debts and draws the required \$600 million from its foreign exchange reserves in addition to meeting the currency needs for imports, the Kingdom would face a cash crunch as opposed to the prevailing comfort in the central bank's books.

Jordan has to meet its foreign debts repayments in arrears before seeking new debt rescheduling agreements with the London Club of commercial institutions (among which are Kuwaiti financial agencies and banks) and the

Paris club of creditor governments.

Mr. Jaraneh has said that a moratorium on Jordanian repayments of principal and interest on its foreign debts would help the Kingdom immensely in its efforts to restore order to its economy and put it back on the right track.

But that remains an elusive objective in view of the strain in relations between Amman and Washington, which is sure to twist the arm of international monetary organisations against the Kingdom as implicitly indicated by White House and State Department spokesmen.

One of the major fallouts of the Gulf crisis and Jordan's refusal to endorse the American-led "war camp" against Iraq is the cut off in financial assistance from oil-producing Gulf states.

Then came the Saudi move to cut off its oil supply to make up for the shortfalls from Iraq and to impose a ban on imports of Jordanian produce as well as the transit through Saudi territory of Jordanian trucks bound for the Gulf states — a traditional market for the Kingdom's products.

The Kingdom's leadership had repeatedly pointed out that its burden of foreign debts — one of the highest per capita in the world — was imposed on it as a result of non-fulfilment of pledges made by Arab states in 1979.

Under these pledges, Jordan was to have received over \$12 billion over 10 years, but it actually received only around \$7 billion while it had borrowed from external sources against the expected full contribution.

"We are survivors and will survive the present crisis if we receive non-political external help with no strings attached," said a senior official, who preferred anonymity.

"Our planners and people have proved this point," he added referring to the state of economy in early 1989, when the Kingdom's reserves reflected a negative balance — appropriation of CBI-held funds of 35 per cent of all foreign exchange deposits at commercial banks — to the tune of \$100 million.

Traders expect oil prices to fall regardless of Gulf war outcome

SINGAPORE (R) — Oil prices are set to fall whether peace breaks out in the Middle East or the United States launches a ground offensive to drive Iraq out of Kuwait, oil industry sources said Friday.

"Whatever happens, the end of the war is in sight," said a trader for a major oil company.

"Once there is decisive strike against Iraq, people will say it's all over," a European trader said. "We may have a bit of a price fluctuation but it will come down lower because of the over-supply."

Once the Gulf war ends, the focus of attention will switch to

the abundant supplies of crude oil banging over the market, traders say.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is pumping more oil than before the Gulf crisis began, despite the throttling of exports from Iraq and Kuwait.

Oil prices have already lost half their value since the Gulf war started on Jan. 17.

On that day, the price of Britain's internationally-traded Brent blend crude shot briefly up to \$33.50 a barrel. On Friday it fluctuated between \$16.20 and \$16.80 for April, first falling

down on Iraq's positive response to the Soviet plan, then edging back up due to the cool U.S. reaction.

An all-out ground war is likely to give the market a psychological boost but traders said unless chemical or nuclear weapons were used any gains would be short-lived.

They said the price of Brent could fall to around \$15 when the war was over.

Oil ministers from four key OPEC countries will meet in Vienna Monday to discuss how to stop an oil price collapse.

"They are going to see what can be done when the hostilities

cease and the (oil) market collapses," a senior delegate to the meeting told Reuters Wednesday.

OPEC suspended oil production quotas in September to allow members to boost output to compensate for the gap of more than four million barrels caused by an international boycott on oil from Iraq and Kuwait.

This has allowed total group output to actually rise above the level produced prior to the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

OPEC's target price for oil, called the "minimum reference" price, is \$21 a barrel.

Saudi prince invests \$590m in Citicorp

NEW YORK (R) — A Saudi Arabian prince has agreed to invest \$590 million in Citicorp, a move that would make him the largest single shareholder in the biggest U.S. bank, Citicorp and news reports said Thursday.

Prince Al Waleed Ben Talal, a member of the Saudi royal family, already owns 4.9 per cent of Citicorp's common stock and could eventually own 14.9 per cent if he converted his new preferred stock holding into common shares.

Citicorp said the placement of \$590 million of convertible preferred shares with the prince would complete the first step of a plan, announced last month, to raise \$1 to \$1.5 billion.

The banking concern has been trying since October to raise that amount of capital from investors.

The prince, 35, is a distant relative of King Fahd. His fortune has been assessed by Forbes magazine at more than \$1 billion, amassed partly through construction, a travel agency business and owning a bank in Saudi Arabia.

According to the New York Times, the prince has said he is

acting on his own behalf and not as a representative of the Saudi government or royal family members, and will not be represented on the Citicorp board.

He has also promised not to try to gain control of the company, the New York Times said.

The newspaper said the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank, had approved the investment.

It quoted Citicorp Chairman John Reed as saying the investment was the first of several moves aimed at improving the company's financial strength.

Options included selling securities, raising equity capital from investors or selling parts of its business.

The newspaper said the investment was a reminder that some investors were beginning to look beyond the losses which U.S. banks have suffered from real estate loans.

Citicorp announced a \$382 million loss for the fourth quarter of 1990 as it set aside funds to cover losses on loans and expenses associated with payroll cuts. It plans to cut 8,000 from its 90,000 workforce.

EC parliament approves lending to East Europe

STRASBOURG, France (R) — The European Parliament Friday approved European Community (EC) development loans of up to \$1 billion to Romania, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria.

The approval followed an agreement in principle by the 12 EC states to offer the East European countries loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) of up to 700 million European Currency Units (\$980 million) over the next two years.

Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia already receive loans from the EIB, the EC's finance arm. But Spain dragged its feet for months

over lending to other former communist states, saying Latin American countries should also get help.

The compromise, agreed by member states last week and likely to be endorsed by EC finance ministers on Feb. 25, would clear the lending authority for Eastern Europe but leave the door open for loans elsewhere.

In a separate vote the parliament backed a trade accord with Romania, signed by the Community last October, which would ease curbs on imports and promote cooperation in such fields as agriculture, ecology and science and technology.

Study says low pay in developing nations threatens free trade

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new study foresees a severe stagnation in world trade unless Third World wages are brought closer to those earned by workers in developed countries.

For instance, said the study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a typical garment worker in Bangladesh earns about 10 cents for each shirt he makes while a worker in a more advanced U.S. factory could make the shirt in half the time but at 17 times as much money.

Mexican workers earn only about \$1 for every \$8 earned by workers in the United States, the study said.

"If workers... in Mexico... earn only a fraction of the wages of Ford workers in Detroit, but produce essentially as many engines as Detroiters, then potentially we have a problem that Henry Ford would understand: Too many Fords, not enough customers," wrote Walter Russell Mead, the study's author.

In 1914, Ford created a sensation by announcing that he would pay skilled workers \$5 a day, about twice the usual wage. He wanted them to be able to buy the model T they produced.

In the study for EPI, a Washington policy research group, Mead called for enforcing international agreements on standards for labour. He warned that otherwise there would be more pressure to protect American jobs and industries, restricting the U.S. market for goods from the Third World.

"Hours are longer, and holidays fewer in developing countries," he wrote. "In Korea some

factory workers average two days off per month. In Morocco, children as young as seven years old work in oriental carpet factories where their small fingers are better able to tie the thousands of knots required."

Representative Donald Pease told congressional panel considering a U.S.-Mexican free trade agreement that jobs in his area are being lost to Third World competition. He would like to have U.S. authorities consider the practices Mead described to be unfair trade advantages, subject to retaliation by the United States.

Mead's ideas were criticised by Ben Wattenberg, a former assistant to President Lyndon Johnson who is now a fellow at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

"His conclusion is protectionist and regulatory," Wattenberg said in an interview. "He claims to know best what everybody's regulations should be. But you can't save the market by more intensively regulating it."

Mead had attacked a study by Robert Lawrence and Robert Litan of the Brookings Institution, another public policy group in Washington. They argued that the United States can compete with low-wage countries because American labour is more productive.

"This view misses a historic shift in the global economy," Mead wrote. "Technological change increasingly makes it possible to combine advanced techniques with (low) wage levels."

Romania, Iran sign oil, \$100m agreement

BUCHAREST (AP) — Iran agreed Thursday to sell Romania four million tonnes of crude oil over the next year, about a fifth of the country's total requirements.

The Islamic republic also agreed to process a large amount of its oil in Romania, giving the country's mammoth, moribund refining industry a significant boost. It will also grant Romania \$100 million credit to be used for the purchase of unspecified Iranian products.

The agreement was signed Thursday morning after three days of talks between delegations headed by visiting Iranian Vice President Massoud Rahnizi and Iranian Minister of Petroleum Engineering Djalmaru.

Djalmaru was quoted by the state news agency Rompres as saying the agreement showed Iran "recognises a friend in need."

Romania currently is in the throes of an energy crisis, as are most of its neighbours in Eastern Europe. Romania's troubles are brought about by the Gulf crisis, a reduction of imports from the Soviet Union, and decreased domestic production.

Romania's oil industry has still not recovered from its devastating eight-year war with Iraq, which

ended in 1988.

Iran agreed to process oil in Romania in the late 1970s, but the plan was derailed by the Iran-Iraq war, leaving Romanian plants built for this purpose partially inactive.

Officials have recently been actively seeking foreign clients for the country's oil-processing industry, which presently does not have enough work to operate efficiently and has therefore been partially shut down.

No further details of the agreement were released.

But high-ranking Romanian officials, speaking on anonymously, said Iran would have at least 12 million tonnes of crude oil processed in Romania over the coming year.

"The Iranians will process enough oil here to enable our industry to operate at full capacity," said an official in the foreign ministry. "It will make Romania Iran's primary distribution point to Eastern Europe as well."

The officials would not say how much Romania will pay for the oil, but Rompres said that it would be in hard currency.

Romania's oil requirement is estimated at around 20 million tonnes yearly, but in recent years it has been getting by with only 12-13 million tonnes.

Greenspan sees little evidence U.S. credit crunch is easing

WASHINGTON (R) — Federal Reserve (Fed) Board Chairman Alan Greenspan said Thursday he sees little evidence that the U.S. credit crunch caused by tighter bank lending is easing, despite cuts in interest rates that are intended to get banks to lend.

In testimony to a House of Representatives banking subcommittee, Greenspan said some banks have been too cautious in their lending practices and in many instances pulled back on

lending to the point that has not been in their own best interests.

"The evidence that the credit crunch is easing off are still very minimal, if at all," Greenspan said.

But in a repeat of testimony that he gave Wednesday to the Senate Banking Committee, Greenspan said concerns over the central bank's ability to counter the credit crunch through its monetary policy are exaggerated. The U.S. central bank has been lowering interest rates steadily since July in an effort to offset the credit crunch and spur the economy out of recession.

Greenspan offered little new insight into what the central bank's next move will be. But in prepared testimony he repeated statements that he expects the U.S. economy to swing out of recession later this year and infla-

tion to be at its lowest level in several years.

He also cautioned that it may be unwise to rule out the chance that the recession will deepen, given the uncertainties caused by the Gulf war and problems in the banking industry.

He told the House subcommittee that raising taxes to finance the Gulf war would further damage an economy that already is in recession. It is premature to talk about raising taxes, because U.S. allies have offered to share the

costs of the war, he said. A tax increase "would be unhelpful at this point," he said, adding that he expects a fairly dramatic drop in the U.S. budget deficit in the coming years.

He also told the House panel that the Fed has not been comfortable with some of the dollar's recent weakness and that there have been discussions among the major trading partners to coordinate economic policy in a manner that does not upset currency markets.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, February 21, 1991					
Central Bank official rates					
	Buy	Sell			
U.S. dollar	660.0	670.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	307.3	510.3
Pound Sterling	1298.4	1306.3	Dutch guilder	395.0	397.4
Deutschemark	445.3	447.9	Swedish crown	119.4	120.1
Swiss franc	521.3	524.4	Italian lira (for 100)	39.4	39.8
French franc	130.9	131.7	Belgian franc (for 10)	216.6	217.9

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.			
	One Sterling	U.S. dollar	
One U.S. dollar	1.9610/20	Canadian dollar	1.1495/1505
	1.4873/80	Deutschemark	1.6745/55
	1.2715/22	Dutch guilders	30.61/66
	5.0600/50	Swiss francs	1118/1114
	130.90/00	Belgian francs	130.90/00
		French francs	
		Italian lire	
		Japanese yen	

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — A Soviet announcement that Iraq had reacted positively to Moscow's plan for peace in the Gulf sent the All Ordinaries index up 19.5 points to 1,387.3.

TOKYO — Stocks closed easier following news of a positive Iraqi response and a cool U.S. reaction to a Soviet peace plan. The Nikkei index slipped 121.56 points to 25,902.81.

FRANKFURT — Gulf jitters kept the market cautious but the blue chip DAX index gained 16.20 points to 1,582.52.

ZURICH — Investors were cautiously optimistic about a settlement of the Gulf war. The all-share SPI index rose 8.9 points to 1,011.7, its highest close since September.

PARIS — French investors shrugged off uncertainty over the Gulf war. The CAC-40 index rose 7.16 points to 1,716.88, a six-month closing high.

LONDON — U.K. shares recovered on a U.S. rally after President Bush set a deadline for Iraqi troops to begin withdrawing from Kuwait. The FTSE index closed 1.9 higher at 2,314.3.

NEW YORK — President Bush's ultimatum to Iraq raised hopes of a quick end to the Gulf war. At 1716 GMT the Dow Jones industrials were up 24.75 to 2,916.58.

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Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

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Russian hardliners act to oust Yeltsin; Moldovan leader quits

MOSCOW (R) — Communist hardliners in the Russian parliament tried to oust Boris Yeltsin as leader in a furious response to his demand for the resignation of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The called for an extraordinary meeting of the full Russian parliament with the clear aim of proposing a vote of no confidence in Yeltsin, Gorbachev's political arch-rival.

"Yeltsin's striving for authoritarian rule and confrontation and his desire to decide issues of internal and foreign policy on his own are becoming more and more obvious," said a statement read to parliament by deputy Svetlana Goryacheva.

"He is running not only the USSR but also Russia. The people are tired of endless promises," said the statement, signed by Goryacheva and three other senior parliamentary leaders.

In a separate development, the president of the southwestern Soviet Republic of Moldova resigned, declaring that he was the victim of a Communist Party

campaign to discredit him. Mircea Soegur, a former party official ood widely regarded as a liberal, said he would stay on as acting president if the Moldovan parliament agreed to direct elections to the presidency.

The move against Yeltsin, in his own Russian power base, came two days after he called for Gorbachev's resignation in a dramatic television interview.

Passions ran high in the debate, during which only one parliamentary leader — Yeltsin's first deputy Ruslan Khasbulatov — spoke in his defence. Outside parliament rival groups staged pro-and anti-Yeltsin demonstrations.

Yeltsin was elected Russian president just under a year ago with a narrow majority in the Congress of People's Deputies, the full Russian legislature.

Hardliners in the federal Soviet parliament have accused Yeltsin of declaring "civil war" and Gorbachev delivered a clear attack on his rival in remarks carried by the trade union newspaper Trud.

"Someone today is trying to inflame the people," Trud quoted

Gorbachev as telling a group of union leaders.

"These people are destroyers, they have no positive programme. Their only aim is to cause a national scandal to achieve their ambitious goals. But today it's very dangerous to rock the boat," he was quoted as saying.

Yeltsin, a former Communist Party boss in the Urals city of Sverdlovsk, was summoned by Gorbachev in 1985 to run the Moscow party organisation and take a seat on the ruling politburo.

But Yeltsin broke with his mentor two years later and, buoyed by popular support, has emerged as his main rival.

The two have clashed repeatedly because of Yeltsin's attempts to curb the power of central Soviet authorities over his Russian Federation, the biggest of the 15 republics.

Yeltsin wants control over Russia's vast resources and freedom to conduct more radical economic reform. Gorbachev says his plans would lead to chaos.

Events seem to be moving fast

towards a final showdown between the two rivals. Resurgent hardline Communists are determined to drive out Yeltsin, who quit the party last July.

Moldova's Snegur said the Communist campaign against him had begun since the appointment of a new party chief, Grigory Yermeyev, earlier this month.

The Communists lost power to liberals and radicals in elections last year in Moldova, which has been shaken by confrontation between the majority Romanian-speaking population and Russian and Turkic or Gagauz minorities.

Soviet News Agency (TASS), in a report from the Moldovan capital of Kishinyov near the border with Romania, said Snegur also accused the republic's radical Prime Minister Mircea Druk of seeking to reduce the role of the presidency.

Only last week Snegur visited Romania, to which most of Moldova belonged before 1940, and was given a full state welcome by President Ion Iliescu. Many Moldovans are known to favour eventual reunion with Romania.

Seoul opposition chief calls on Roh to resign

SEOUL (AP) — The top opposition leader charged President Roh Tae-Woo Friday with a coverup and demanded a new investigation into a multimillion dollar scandal some call Korea's Watergate.

Kim Dae-Jung, head of the leading opposition Party for Peace and Democracy, demanded Roh order a new investigation, fire the justice minister and prosecutor general and name a new, neutral cabinet.

"It was a coverup all the way," Kim told reporters. He said Roh should resign from the governing party to remain neutral.

Roh's Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) angrily denounced Kim Friday, claiming it was "a strategic design to expand and circulate rumours" and to divide the administration and the governing party.

Anti-government rallies were held at two Seoul universities and dissidents and radicals said demonstrations would be held Saturday demanding Roh's resignation.

The scandal is the largest since Roh took office in 1989 and it has tarnished the governing party as the country prepares for elections later this year. Escalating costs and lack of housing are major domestic issues.

Riot police firing tear gas charged into Seoul's Kyunghee University after about 200 students burned an American flag and shouted slogans demanding Roh's resignation.

"Let's overthrow Roh Tae-Woo," students yelled, fighting police with firebombs, rocks and clubs in an hour-long clash. Several injuries were reported, but there were no arrests, police said.

Radical students claim Roh is a puppet of the U.S. government. They frequently burn U.S. flags at anti-government protests.

The opposition leader said his party had obtained a confidential memo allegedly showing Roh's office was implicated in helping a win permission for illegal construction in a restricted "green belt" surrounding Seoul.

Nine people, including a presidential aide and five governing and opposition party legislators, have been arrested. They were charged with accepting \$1.4 million in bribes.

CFE talks stalled over 'Soviet intransigence'

VIENNA (AP) — Conventional arms talks stalled Thursday over what delegations from both East and West called Soviet intransigence on complying with a treaty signed last November.

"Twenty-one nations tried to prove that the treaty meant one thing, and the Soviets tried to prove it meant something else," said a member of an Eastern European delegation.

A Western diplomat said no further plenary meetings of the 22 delegations to talks on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) were scheduled until March 21, the day before this round is over.

No working groups are scheduled to meet, but delegations will stay in contact informally and a new negotiating session can be called if the Soviet position changes, said the Western official.

Both diplomats spoke on condition they not be identified.

The 16 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the six Warsaw Pact countries, including the Soviet Union, signed an agreement in Paris last November committing themselves to slashing their arsenals of tanks and other conventional weapons in Europe.

The current round of talks are to focus on the number of soldiers in Europe.

But the West says the Soviets are trying to exclude three motorised infantry divisions of about 1,000 tanks from the Paris treaty by transferring them to naval control, and they have questioned the numbers the Soviets have provided for the weapons they continue to hold.

French leaders clash over new youth cigarette brand

PARIS (AP) — French leaders batted each other over the state-owned tobacco company's embarrassing decision to introduce a new brand of cigarette aimed specifically at young people.

The release of the new brand comes just two months after the lawmakers voted to ban cigarette advertising after Jan. 1, 1993 in a campaign to curb smoking, particularly among youth.

Premier Michel Rocard condemned the state-owned tobacco company Seita for marketing the new brand, called "Chevignon" after a clothing label popular with high-school students.

"This is not admissible, and will be put right," Rocard, a chain smoker, declared in a radio interview. "Seita is violating the law ... in a most explicit manner."

But the prime minister quickly found himself under attack by budget minister and fellow smoker Michel Charasse, who said that Seita was merely protecting its domestic market.

"I prefer that French people buy French cigarettes rather than foreign ones, because that will permit us to keep jobs in Seita factories," Charasse said.

Seita adds 12 million francs (\$2.4 million) in tobacco taxes a year to French government coffers, and Charasse said the Chevignon brand should add to that figure.

The new brand is copied after a line of clothing extremely popular with high-school students, whom the government is officially trying to keep from lighting up.

Seita hopes the cigarette will have the same success. Tobacco shops selling the brand, which came onto the market Monday, say their stocks have been emptied within hours by 15-20 year-olds.

Health Minister Bruno Durieux claims that the introduction of the brand violates a new law to ban cigarette and alcohol advertising.

So does Social Affairs Ministers Claude Evin, who shepherded the hard-fought anti-tobacco advertising bill through the National Assembly and Senate. It also significantly curbs alcohol ads.

The new cigarette brand would trickily use the Chevignon clothing label as an advertisement, thus violating the law, Evin says.

Seita and Chevignon, a private company whose clothing harkens to the American 1950s, worked out the launch of the cigarette brand together and will share the profits.

The packet of cigarettes bears the brown-and-kakhi Chevignon label featuring a propeller aircraft.

Seita responds that it will withdraw the brand only if the courts decide it is violating the law. The clothing company is also awaiting a legal decision.

Charasse said he has no intention of being intimidated by his government colleagues.

"The anti-tobacco law clearly doesn't have the intention of forbidding the consumption and sale of cigarettes and cigars," he said. "The duty of the state is to preserve this industrial tool."

Prima ballerina Margot Fonteyn dies

PANAMA CITY (R) — Dame Margot Fonteyn, who rose from a provincial role to the pinnacle of the ballet world in a legendary partnership with Rudolf Nureyev, died Thursday in her bed.

A friend said the British-born Fonteyn, who was a major star for three decades before beginning her partnership with Nureyev, a dancer 20 years her junior, had suffered a long bout with cancer.

Rodrigo Moreno, administrative director of the Panama City Hospital where the 71-year-old Fonteyn died, reported, the immediate cause of her death as blood-poisoning.

"She had cancer the last three years," said Gerassimos Kanelopoulos, a local bookstore owner and friend, who said he had visited her at the hospital Saturday, only to find her sleeping under heavy sedation.

Born Margaret Hookham on May 18, 1919, in Reigate, south of London, Fonteyn became a prima ballerina at the age of 17. She danced all the principal roles in classical ballet during her long career, which began as a snowflake in The Nutcracker with the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company in 1934.

The Sadler's Wells became the Royal Ballet in 1956, and it was Fonteyn's partnership in the 1960s with Russian defector Nureyev that took the dance world by storm.

After a 1964 performance of Swan Lake in Vienna, the pair took 89 curtain calls, the highest ever recorded by ballet dancers. It was her human qualities off-stage however, that perhaps brought her an equal amount of fame and admiration.

Panamanian President Guillermo Endara issued a statement Thursday, praising her as a woman of high moral character and calling her death "an irreparable loss."

Fonteyn, who was firmly established as a star by the end of the 1930s, was regarded by choreographer Sir Frederick Ashton as his muse and he created many ballets for her.

She first came to Panama in 1955 after she married Roberto (Tito) Arias, a Panamanian lawyer and politician.

In 1964, her husband's attempted assassination changed their lives. The shooting left Arias paralysed and barely able to speak, and Fonteyn began to spend more of her time in Panama to be with him.

Created a dame commander of the British Empire in 1956, Fonteyn continued dancing into her sixties and last danced in public in February 1986 in Miami, Florida. She devoted her retirement years to tending her crippled husband at their 600-acre farm on Panama's Pacific Coast.

After Arias died of cancer in November 1989 she continued to live at the farm. The couple had no children.

Arias, who was both the son and nephew of Panamanian presidents, introduced Fonteyn to military strongman Manuel Antonio Noriega. And she took Nureyev to meet him in 1987.

Fonteyn was at the farm when the United States invaded Panama in December 1989 to overthrow Noriega.

Tirana streets calm after 2 days of demonstrations

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Troops and tanks guarded key Tirana buildings Friday after a second day of pro-democracy upheaval, but a resident of the Albanian capital said the streets were calm and people were back at work.

Communist Party officials called on citizens in an address late Thursday to "halt the dark forces in their tracks."

"The power of the people is imperiled, and the victories we have achieved are in danger," the appeal said.

Radio Tirana journalist Vladimir Ciceani said in a telephone interview that police were drawn up around the Central Committee building of the ruling Communist Party and around the National Museum, both sites of rallies Thursday.

Two tanks were standing near the museum on Skanderbeg Square, the focal point of the two days of anti-Stalinist demonstrations, he said. A small group of soldiers was on patrol in front of Radio Tirana.

Tirana, crippled Wednesday by wide-spread strikes, was back to normal, "with stores open and people back to work," said Ciceani. There were no reports of unrest outside the capital, he said.

He said that students, whose hunger strike led to the latest outbreak of unrest, were expected back in classes Monday

after a three-week boycott.

"The party and its Central Committee resolutely condemn these acts of vandalism which have outraged the entire people," the Communists said in an appeal broadcast over Albanian radio and monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. in London.

"Honest and patriotic people must organise ... and together with Communists confront the situation in order to halt the dark forces in their tracks."

Police said Communist leaders accused unidentified "dark forces," including some outside Albania, of whipping up discontent.

On Thursday, demonstrators burned books by Albania's Communist founder Enver Hoxha and tore down slogans praising the ruling Party of Labour in a further repudiation of the small Balkan country's Stalinist legacy.

Security forces fired warning shots into the air to disperse the protesters, some of whom sang and danced on tanks parked at a road block protecting an exclusive district where Communist top leadership lives.

A Tirana resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said a crowd moved from the road block to nearby Skanderbeg Square and destroyed a slogan reading "long live the Labour Party of Albania," leaving only "Albania" intact.

Former top Chinese official stripped of post

HONG KONG (R) — Xu Jiatao, Peking's most senior official in Hong Kong before his reported defection to the United States, has been stripped of China's official posts in the National People's Congress (NPC) and accused of betrayal.

The official New China News Agency (NCNA) said Friday the decision had been taken after a report by the Guangdong People's Congress. Xu Jiatao was once NCNA Hong Kong director.

"The report stated that Xu had betrayed the people, caused extremely bad consequences both at home and abroad, and betrayed the basic conditions expected of an NPC deputy," NCNA said.

Xu, replaced as NCNA Hong Kong director last February by hard-line Vice Foreign Minister Zhou Nan, left unexpectedly for the United States on April 30. Chinese officials denied that he had defected, saying he had merely travelled to California for an extended holiday.

But Chinese sources in Hong Kong with access to Chinese Communist Party documents said Xu, 75, was now being seen as the highest ranking defector in Peking's hierarchy.

"I have seen an internal Communist Party circular which in fact treats him as one of the worst-ever defectors," said one Chinese source who declined to be identified.

"It's pretty obvious he will eventually lose his party membership after losing his NPC seat," he added.

Xu, a smiling, grey-haired figure much-loved by local political cartoonists, had been China's senior representative in Hong Kong since 1983.

Many who knew the veteran Communist Party politician said he came to understand and appreciate the way Hong Kong, due to revert to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, operated as a free-wheeling bastion of capitalism.

Japan's crown prince still in search of a bride

TOKYO (AP) — There are far more women a woman could take home to meet her parents. He's wealthy, well-educated, likes to climb mountains and play the viola. He's also heir to Japan's throne.

So why can't Crown Prince Naruhito, who turns 31 Saturday, find a bride?

That is the question over which much of Japan is musing. "Why is Japan's most splendid man having so much trouble finding a wife?" asked a recent headline in the Shukan Bunshun, a popular weekly magazine.

The short, soft-spoken imperial heir will be officially installed Saturday as crown prince in a series of centuries-old rituals. The investiture comes just three months after his father, Emperor Akihito, formally assumed Japan's chrysanthemum throne, the world's oldest hereditary monarchy.

As far as most of the public is concerned, however, Naruhito's marital status appears to be of far more interest than the ceremony. "He would like to be part of

the process of choosing his own bride, instead of having the palace arrange a marriage," said Minoru Hamao, a former imperial chamberlain.

"But the crown prince has very little opportunity to mix socially with marriage-aged women," Hamao said in a recent interview.

Hamao said women who would pass the strict requirements for becoming a future empress also have far more freedom than their pre-war counterparts. They are less inclined to give up their freedom for the cloistered, tradition-bound life behind the moat of the imperial palace.

Possible brides may also have been scared away by the example of Empress Michiko, who since marrying Akihito in 1959 — the first commoner to wed an imperial heir — has been a constant target of gossip.

Upon his return in 1983 from post-graduate studies at Oxford, Naruhito told reporters, "it is best to marry before age 30." Two years later, he added that he would "like to avoid" being single

and he retracted those comments when he reached that milestone last year, saying that he is optimistic and pursuing the matter at his own pace.

But soon after, Naruhito's 24-year-old brother, Prince Akihishino, announced his engagement to the daughter of a college professor, once again whetting the media's appetite for imperial nuptials.

According to the latest "scoop," palace officials have set the crown prince up with Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's daughter, one of several dozen candidates the media has uncovered. Denials from her parents were quickly forthcoming.

Reporters have also stalked out the homes of other suspected candidates. That has led palace officials, and the emperor, to complain that all the media fuss may be scaring away prospective mates.

"I hope this matter (of finding a bride) will be handled quietly," Akihito scolded reporters at a news conference last December. "I hear that there are some peo-

ple who have been inconvenienced."

As the gossip women's magazine that have sensationalised the prince's plight are quick to point out, early weddings had been the rule of thumb with Naruhito's forefathers.

Emperor Akihito wed Empress Michiko when he was 26. Hirohito, Naruhito's grandfather, married when he was 23. Naruhito's great-grandfather, Taisho, died the knot at age 20.

Naruhito can find solace in the fact that none of those three emperors-to-be was married when officially invested as crown prince.

His great-great-grandfather Emperor Meiji remained single until after assuming the throne in 1867 — at the age of 14.

Akihito greatly expanded the prospective bride pool by marrying Michiko and opening the way for other imperial family members to wed commoners as Akihishino did.

Naruhito has said that noble blood is not a primary concern in his search.

COLUMN

'A bang on the head may have killed Mozart'

NEW YORK (AP) — A French scholar believes Mozart died of head injury, not rheumatic fever or poisoning as many thought. The conclusion by anthropologist Pierre-Francois Puech of the University of Provence resulted from his finding a fracture in the skull believed to have been the composer's. Archaeology magazine reports in its March issue. The magazine said Mozart was known to have begun suffering severe headaches in the spring of 1790, more than a year before his death. Puech said the fracture, of the left temple, may have been the result of a fall. Puech found indications that the fracture caused chronic bleeding "that might well account for Mozart's headaches, weakness and fainting that culminated in his coma and subsequent death on Dec. 5, 1791," the magazine said. Standard references attribute the composer's death at the age of 35 to a return of rheumatic fever he suffered in childhood, combined with excessive bloodletting, a common medical practice at the time. His illness and rapid decline gave rise to speculation at the time that he had been poisoned, a theory revived in recent years by the movie and play Amadeus. The skull is part of an official archive, the Mozarteum, in Salzburg, Austria. It was dug up from Mozart's burial site, just outside Vienna, about 10 years after the composer died. The Mozarteum maintains that it has not been established conclusively that the skull is Mozart's.

Japanese to sell imported beef in vending machines

TOKYO (R) — U.S. beef will join the myriad of goods sold from vending machines in Japan when Tokyo scraps its quotas on beef imports in April, a company in the southern city of Kobe said. Packages containing three different cuts of frozen beef will sell for about 1,000 yen a kilogramme, (\$3.50 a pound), well below other retail prices here, said a spokesman for the joint Japanese-U.S. meat company that came up with the idea.

Explosive toys banned after 3 children injured

BRUSSELS (AP) — Belgian officials, legal officers and consumer organisations are hunting a new "mini-grenade" sold as a toy, which has injured at least three children so far. A spokeswoman for Cric, a consumer information centre, said the black plastic toy was still on sale in Brussels, although the local prosecutor, acting on a complaint from one of the injured children, had banned its distribution. The three victims reportedly suffered hand and face wounds and burns. The woman said the mini-grenade had the shape of an egg and was apparently made in Italy. They said the mini-grenade had to be lit by the user who should immediately get away from it. The spokeswoman said such an explosive device, according to Belgian law, should not be sold to children under age 16, but the mini-grenade was widely distributed like ordinary fireworks in streetcorner newspaper shops. The child of a Ministry of Economy official was injured by the toy, which prompted the ministry to lodge a legal complaint.

Woman calls mother to U.S. to cat-sit

RIYADH (AP) — An expatriate New Zealander working as a camerawoman in Saudi Arabia has flown her mother to the United States on a cat-sitting mission. Margaret Moch has been working in the United States since 1980 and last May joined the Cable News Network. "I really, really wanted to come here (to the Gulf)," they finally sent me over on Feb. 10, together with about 30 boxes of gear," she said Wednesday. But Moch had a problem — her cat F.N. The female Persian-Siamese cross was a stray which adopted Moch's apartment as its home. "I rang my mother, Hona Wilson ... and asked her if she would mind living in my Dallas apartment until the war was over," Moch said. "She said, 'all right, it's not every day your daughter goes to war.'"